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Revival Sermons

By

JOHN W. CHURCH

Author of "The Revival of 1800"

And

"The Revival of 1857"

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REVIVAL SERMONS.

BY THE
REV. ALBERT BARNES,
OF AMERICA,
AUTHOR OF COMMENTARY ON
THE NEW TESTAMENT, JOB, ISALAH, AND DANIEL,
&c., &c.

EDITED BY THE
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INTRODUCTION.

"WATCHMAN, what of the night? watchman, what of the night?" was the question of a taunting Edomite, thousands of years ago, to one of the Jewish watchmen; and the reply given was, "The night cometh, and also the morning;" as though he had said, "There is yet a long dark night of Jewish captivity; but beyond the darkness I see the first streak of morning." Since that utterance, that patch of light has dawned in full day. And just as the tide comes in small ripples, and seems to retire, but comes on again and again, gaining by small degrees, slowly, but surely, and, despite all opposition, creeps over crevice, sand-hill, and jutting rock, pausing not till it has triumphantly touched high-water mark; just so has Christianity gained upon the world, imperceptibly it may be; and at times it seems, like the wave, to retire, but it is only to gain new strength. It will never pause till it has won the final triumph. Already the morning cometh; the streak of grey is fast turning into golden day. We are evidently on the eve of mighty changes,—in a transition state; a new era is dawning; old hoary institutions are shaking to their very centre. The tide of spiritual life is rising; it is among us, around us, disjoining and altering the shape of things; and men scarcely know how to adapt themselves, and shape their work, to the altered times. Still, to the far-seeing seer, everything is full of hope, and tinged with brightness. Men are earnest, earnest in error as well as in truth. The very air is full of mystery and whisperings; we listen, and above the din of the world we hear the noise of the mustering forces, the faint clash of arms; everything por-

tends a mighty *coming struggle*. But if there be any truth in the history of the past, the signs of the times, the promise of God, no doubt is left on which side shall be heard the long, loud, final shout of victory.

Albert Barnes is one of the noble champions of Christianity, a man for the times. His Commentaries are widely read on both sides of the Atlantic; they have gone forth by many publishers, in many editions, and in number tens of thousands. The name of Albert Barnes is a name the world will not let die.

The Sermons composing this volume were first published in America. They are rich in matter, striking in illustration, beautiful in style, powerful in appeal. They should be,

1. Studied by ministers of the Gospel,—for style and specimens of preaching eminently fitted for the times in which we live.

2. Read by private Christians. No Christian can prayerfully read this volume without being quickened, excited, stimulated to seize life's short hour, that he may strive for a higher life, and make all haste to save the souls of men.

3. Put into the hands of the unconverted. We do not remember to have met with any sermons equal to them in close reasoning, powerful appeals, and in every way so adapted to awaken the conscience, and lead the sinner to God. If we are not greatly at fault in our judgment, this is one of the books that will live. We cast this precious seed upon the waters. May it be instrumental in the salvation of thousands of souls! May its influence be like the circle on the waters, widening and widening, till it shall sweep the very shores of eternity!

A. W.

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SERMON I.

THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF AN INDIVIDUAL.

“BUT now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have need of you.”—1 Cor. xii. 20, 21.

MY remarks on this occasion will have a single object: they will be designed to impress upon my hearers a sense of personal obligation in the cause of religion, the obligation resting on us as individuals. In doing this, I shall endeavour to ascertain the place and the importance of the individual in the social organization, and particularly in the church. “There are many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.” It will contribute to give order to the remarks which I propose to make, if I arrange them under the three following heads:—the erroneous views which prevail in regard to the place and the importance of the individual; the place which, according to the Divine arrangement, he occupies in the social organization necessarily; and the place which he may voluntarily occupy in promoting the cause of religion.

I. First, the erroneous views which prevail in regard to the place and importance of the individual. In regard to this, there are two quite opposite errors, though not equally bordering on virtue or equally harmless. 1. The one which is most common and the least virtuous is that of over-estimating our importance, and consequently of being unwilling to occupy the place which we were designed to fill. It is unnecessary, I presume, to attempt to demonstrate the fact here adverted to, or to search out the causes of it. The error is the child of selfishness and pride, the effect of closing our eyes on the truth respecting ourselves, the result of always looking at one minute object until it magnifies itself so as to occupy the whole field of vision. There are few persons who, at some period of their lives, are not seized with this overweening estimate of themselves. There are many whom it accompanies all their lives, descending with them even to the mouth of the tomb. We think of our own consequence—our talents—our attainments. We think that a breach will be made when we die. We think of the mourners who will gather round us with broken hearts. We think of the solemn sad procession that will go with us to the tomb, forgetting how seldom it is that the hearts of any considerable proportion in a funeral procession are serious and solemn at all, or care anything about the dead. We look at our own affairs, and press them forward, as if everything else should give way to them, and as if the world had no interests so great that they may not be required to yield to our convenience.

Now how contrary all this is to truth and reality it is hardly necessary to attempt to show. Few will care about it at all when we die, and the world at large will care nothing and know nothing about it. A very little circle of friends will be affected, as a little circle of water is agitated when a drop of rain falls into the ocean. At the

centre of that small circle of friends there will be some deep emotion, and some tears of genuine grief will be shed; at a very little distance the emotion will be fainter and feebler; at a point but a little more remote there will be none; and soon, very soon, all the agitation there was will have died away, as when the little drops of rain fell into the ocean.

“The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will share
His favourite phantom.”—BRYANT.

A few friends will go and bury us, and then they will turn away to their own concerns, forgetful that we are sleeping in the grave. Affection will rear a stone and plant a few flowers over our grave; but the hand that reared the stone, or planted the flowers, will soon become unable to cut the letters deeper as they become obliterated, or to cultivate the flowers; and in a brief period the little hillock will be smoothed down and the stone will fall, and neither friend nor stranger will be concerned to ask which one of the forgotten millions of the earth was buried there. No “Old Mortality” will go to cut again those effaced words which told our name, and the time of our birth and of our death. Every vestige that we ever lived upon the earth will have vanished away. All the little memorials of our remembrance—the lock of hair encased in gold, or the portrait that hung in our dwellings—will cease to have the slightest value to any living being; nor will even momentary curiosity be excited to know who wore that hair, or whose countenance is delineated there.

“On my grassy grave
The men of future times will careless tread,
And read my name upon the sculptured stone;
Nor will the sound familiar to their ears
Recall my vanished memory.”—H. KIRKE WHITE.

2. The other error is the opposite one more rare, but more virtuous, and more nearly bordering upon truth, that of *undervaluing* our importance as individuals. In melancholy mood we look at the facts just adverted to. We think of the hundreds of millions that dwell on the earth, each one just as important in his own sphere as we are, and ask ourselves how many there are of these that we know or care about; and then by a natural transition we ask pensively how many of them know us, or care anything about us. We remember what countless hosts have lived and played their parts and are forgotten. And then we seize the glass of the astronomer, and look out on other worlds and systems, when the imagination is lost in their immensity and their distance, and fancy them all peopled with as dense a population as our own, and come back with the impressive truth that all our earth, compared with these worlds, is literally less in proportion than a single grain of sand to all the sands which are spread along the shores of oceans; and with no mock modesty we ask, What are we? Of what importance are we amidst these multitudes, these worlds? What interests would suffer if we should be overlooked? Who would weep if we should be forgotten for ever? What is man, that Thou—the Maker of these worlds—art mindful of him? Who in these worlds would know it if I should cease to be?

Looking out then on these opposite errors, it is of importance to understand our real place in the system of things where our Maker has placed us,—the real work which is given us to do,—the real bearing of what we do on the organization around us.

II. My second object, therefore, was to consider the place which the individual necessarily occupies in the social organization. Perhaps we shall find something not inconsistent with the exercises of humility and modesty,

which will inform our minds with a conviction of his importance.

We have an illustration of what I mean in the text, and in the other verses relating to the same subject in the chapter from which the text is taken. The body is made up of many members, or parts, each one of which in its place is necessary to the harmony and happiness of the whole, and no one of which can be spared without injury. The eye cannot undertake to do the whole work allotted to the animal frame, and say to the hand, "I have no need of thee." The head cannot undertake the entire functions, and say to the feet, "I have no need of you." It may be, indeed, a question which is the most valuable or useful, and which could be spared with the least disadvantage; but no member, however unimportant, is lost, without our being made sensible, if we were never before, of its value. It is saying only what will occur to any one, to remark, that the whole body is made up of all the individual members; that a nation is but the aggregate of individual citizens; that an army is made up of individual soldiers; that the milky way in the heavens is made up of individual stars; that the ocean is an accumulation of individual drops of water. Any one in itself may seem unimportant; and yet its value is to be estimated, not wholly or mainly by taking it out, and looking at it separately, and asking whether it would be missed by being withdrawn, but by the effect produced by all embraced; as we judge of the beauty and value of the eye, not by taking it out of its socket, and placing it in a casket of gold, but where God has placed it in combination with the other members of the body.

The real importance of the individual is to be estimated by the greatness of the results of all in combination, and the place to measure his value is when we are measuring

those combined and aggregate results. To see the real worth of the soldier all look, not at one private in the army, and ask what difference in such a host it would make if he were killed or should run away ; but we look at the results of such a victory as that at Waterloo,—the effect on kingdoms, and on the course of the world, perhaps for ages ; and divide that result by the numbers engaged, and make that the point by which we estimate its value. To see the importance of the individual labourer in the coral reefs, we do not select one of the countless millions of the little workers, and place him beneath the microscope ; but we look at the land that begins to lift its head above the floods, or the groups of islands that form the habitations of men ; and standing there we form our estimate of the value of the individual labourers that have long since ceased their toils, and that never seemed to be worthy of notice.

It has cost many experiments, and has been the fruit of long study, to know the true worth and place of the individual in the world. At one time, he has seemed to be so unimportant, and there seemed to be such evils from his being associated with others, that it has been held to be the height of virtue to sever all connexion with the living, and carry out the idea of individuality and isolation to the utmost possible extent. Antony in Egypt, and Benedict in Italy, types of this class of men, and fathers of the great and disastrous experiment, believed that virtue consisted in cutting the cords which bound them to the living world, and in separating themselves from the race. They withdrew to caves and solitude ; and made it a virtue not to look on the face of man, and to take no part in the good or the evil of the world, in its social virtue, toils, sufferings, joys. There was to be no family for them, no church, no clan, no tribe, no country, nothing which was to bind *them* to any of the living. The idea of individuality was

to be carried out to the utmost possible extent, without anything of alliance or combination ; and the single virtue to be cherished was to be that which we now deem to be the excuse of the most severe and solitary punishment of felons,—*solitariness*.

The whole monastic system, so fruitful of mischief everywhere, grew out of that conception ; and all its inexpressible vices and follies have been the result of ignorance of the proper place of the individual in the organization where God placed him. Gloomy and ascetic spirits there are in all ages, misanthropic, and disappointed, and disturbed minds, the dissocial and the proud, and the indolent and the soured, to whom the cell of the monk is the appropriate home ; and it shows some knowledge of human nature, and gives some popularity and power to a system of religion, to open caves in the desert for such minds as that of Antony, or to build monasteries like those on Sinai and Lebanon for the soured and the disappointed, or, which is the same thing, to establish a nunnery to which the disappointed and superstitious of the gentler sex may retire, where they may close all communication with a hated world, and where, before physical death has done its work, the body and the soul may be entombed. All this is because the true place of the individual is not known.

An opposite but equally dangerous thing is to combine individuals in unnatural and unholy alliances, in secret associations for evil or public confederations of iniquity. Here the power of the individual is required ; but he is allied with others for purposes which nature never contemplated, and where the organization must sooner or later infringe on some law of society. Here, too, man, dissatisfied with his Maker's arrangements, is always making experiments as wide of the truth and as disastrous in the end, as the scheme of the hermit, or the rules of the monas-

tery. Now at New Harmony, now at Nauvoo, now at Nisseguna and Lebanon, and now in the encampments of the Fourierites, the experiment is made over and over again to see whether the individual cannot be disposed of in some better association than the Creator has designed, and whether some new organization may not be made up that shall be in morals what was sought in the laboratory of the alchemist, to find out some new combinations that should produce the elixir of life, or the philosopher's stone.

God has grouped individuals in their natural relations as He thought best. He has left us free to form new combinations, if these natural groupings are not rudely sundered, but not otherwise; and He frowns on all combinations where they are not observed. If those natural groupings are not regarded, if the new disposing of the individual does not contemplate and recognise them, the new arrangement falls to pieces. The natural grouping of the parts of the human race, as God has arranged them, is into families, neighbourhoods, tribes, nations. He might have peopled the world with independent individuals, bound together by no common sympathies, cheered by no common joys, impelled to effort by no common wants. All that is tender in parental and filial affection, all that is mild, bland, purifying in mutual love, all that is elevating in sympathetic sorrow and joy, all that is great and ennobling in the love of the species, might have been unknown. Isolated individuals, though surrounded by thousands, there might have been no cord to bind us to the living world; and we should have wept alone, rejoiced alone, died alone. The sun might have shed his beams on us in our solitary rambles, and not a mortal have felt an interest in our bliss or woe. Each melancholy individual might have lived, as the hermit seeks to live, unbenefitted by the existence of any other; and with no one to shed a tear on the bed of

moss, when in despair he would lie down, and when he would die.

But this is not the way in which God has made the world. He has made the race one great brotherhood, and each one has some interest in the wildest barbarian that seeks a shelter beneath the rock, or that finds a home in a cave. This great common brotherhood he has broken up into communities of nations, tribes, clans, families; each with its own set of sympathies, with peculiar interests, with peculiar sorrows and joys. In these organizations the individual is never overlooked or forgotten. He is an essential part, and there is not a feeling or law of his nature which is not consulted or regarded. He can play his individual part in his place, act out his nature, develop his talents, and you can form any new combination for good in entire consistency with these laws. The individual is never lost sight of, and yet his power is greatly increased by the combination. The father is an individual, and yet it is never lost sight of that he is a father, and not a man occupying a place which any other man might occupy. The mother is an individual, and yet she is recognised as a mother, and not merely a woman whose place could be as well filled by another. The brother, the sister, the child, the neighbour, the patriarch, the patriot is an individual, and fills his place as such; and yet no small part of the influence which he wields grows out of the place which he occupies.

See now for one moment what may be done in accordance with these laws, or what may grow out of these laws for the good of the whole. There is first the widest play for individual genius and talent. The name of each one of the workmen of St. Peter's as well as the name of Michael Angelo might have been preserved; the labour of each stone-cutter, and carver, and gilder was needful, and the glory of the whole is the result of the

combined skill of all. The fame of Newton is his own, and ever will be; but the world shares the glory and the benefit of the principle. The genius of Milton as an individual had ample play, and his fame is his own, though the happiness of millions has been promoted by "Paradise Lost." It was a toiling individual that wrought all this. So, all that there is in our literature, and arts, and sciences, is the result of the labour of individuals,—individuals not exactly like the builders of the honeycomb, or the coral reefs, that are produced by unvarying and unconscious instinct; individuals not like the builders of the pyramids, or the soldiers in a disciplined army;—positions which nature never contemplated, where there is little more of genius or freedom or independent thinking than there is in the labour of the bee or the beaver;—but individuals exulting in the consciousness of freedom, indulging in their own plans, and fired with their own aspirations, fettered by no improper restraints, walking in the light which their own genius has kindled, and yet in their freedom contributing to all that is noble, and grand, and progressive in society.

There is, secondly, in accordance with these laws, and under these arrangements, the utmost made that is possible of the labours of the individual. He accomplishes most, and works to best advantage, when he is in his own sphere, as God has placed and designed him. In the days of Nehemiah, when they built the walls of the city, the work went on and was completed, because every one repaired over against his own house, and over against his chamber. (Neh. iii. 28, 30.) In an army the battle is secured, not by fighting in disorder, or by forming new combinations at the pleasure of the soldiers, but because each man contends in his appropriate place. The result, whatever glory there may be, is always the effect of the labours of individuals in their own places, and according to the measure of their talent

and skill. Look over our country ; it is studded over with cities, and towns, and villages, and smiling fields of harvest. It is penetrated with turnpikes, and railroads, and canals. Its lakes and rivers are covered with steamboats, and with the evidences of an extended commerce. Its great rivers are crossed on bridges, their falls are ascended by locks, their obstructed channels are cleared out, their shallow places are deepened. The sound of the loom and the mill is everywhere heard in the land. Once all this was an unbroken forest ; no cities or towns were here ; there were no railroads, bridges, or canals ; no vessel save the bark canoe had ever pressed the bosom of these lakes and streams. What we see now is the result of innumerable individual blows of the axemen in levelling the forest, of the labours of innumerable masons and carpenters in building our cities, of innumerable diggers of our canals, of great multitudes of farmers cultivating their own lands, as if there were but one farm on the earth to be ploughed, and fenced, and sown. The looms and spindles of the land are individual things, and there are individual minds that attend to them. All this aggregate of beauty and of wealth exists because there are innumerable numbers of operatives, each minding his own business, and each perhaps unconsciously contributing to the beauty of the whole, as the individual rose on the prairie contributes its own part to the beauty of the whole.

Under these arrangements and by these laws there is a third thing which demands a somewhat more extended illustration. It is that while the individual necessarily occupies this important place in society according to the arrangements of our Maker, there is a field left for voluntary combination of all sorts for good. This leads me directly to the

III. Third point which I proposed to consider,—the place

which the individual may voluntarily occupy in promoting the cause of religion. A good man in the sphere in which Providence places him, should he never make any voluntary effort to go out of that sphere, cannot but do good ; for there is an unconscious and undesigned influence in favour of virtue which every such man exerts, and which is of inestimable value to the cause of truth. The world could not do without this ; and no good man can possibly live in vain, unless he withdraws himself to a cave or dungeon. A consistent Christian father, mother, son, brother, merchant, neighbour, lawyer, farmer, cannot but do good by an example of virtue and piety, and by the discharge of the duties to which these natural relations give rise, though he may not be doing all the good which he might do, if he would combine his influence more with others. For there is a higher and more decisive good of a voluntary kind which can be done without disregarding any of these relations, or impairing at all this involuntary influence on the world. In the course of thought pursued thus far in this discourse I have considered the former of these influences : I shall now proceed in what remains of the discourse to illustrate the latter,—the place which the individual may voluntarily occupy in promoting the cause of religion. I refer now particularly to Christians ; and, in illustrating this part of my subject, it will be natural to notice the slight sense of personal obligation felt in general by professed Christians ; and then to consider the place which the individual Christian may and should voluntarily occupy.

1. First, the slight sense of personal obligation among Christians. I mean by this that there are large numbers in the Christian churches who have only the feeblest conviction, if they have any, of the obligation to make direct personal efforts to promote the common cause ; and that the responsibility of maintaining and carrying forward religion

in the world, in the more direct and self-denying and voluntary efforts, is devolved on others. A few brief illustrations here will show what I particularly wish to get before your minds. First, there is a feeling that the ministers of the Gospel should be peculiarly holy and self-denying, and dead to the world, dead to its pleasures, its gains, its ambition, far more than others. And yet will any one point me to a place in the New Testament which requires ministers of the Gospel to be more devoted to the work of their Master than other Christians, or to any precept or permission which would make that to be right in you, which is wrong in us? Second, there is a prevalent feeling that the missionary to the heathen should be more deeply imbued with the spirit of the Lord Jesus, and with the principles of voluntary benevolence, than other men; that he should be more willing to take up his cross, and to traverse pathless sands or go through driving snows to do good, that he, with almost no advantages for the cultivation of the graces of the Spirit, in a heathen land, a land without Sabbath and sanctuaries and Christian fellowship, should be more holy than we, who in a Christian land enjoy in rich abundance all the means of grace. But will any one point to the place in the New Testament which shows that there is to be one standard of holiness and self-denial for him, another for you and me? Third, there is a feeling connected with that just adverted to, that private members of the Church may do that which it would be highly inconsistent and improper for ministers of the Gospel to do; that they may train up their families in a different manner; that they may engage in other forms of amusement; and that they may cherish and manifest a spirit of worldliness which would be wholly improper in their Christian pastor. But where in the New Testament will any statement be found which, in regard to amusement, and conversation, and general

manner of life, makes a distinction between a pastor and any of his flock? Fourth, there is a feeble sense in the great body of professed Christians of personal responsibility in regard to the institutions and duties of religion. I allude to the slight impression among many private members of the church that any portion of the responsibility rests on them, or that they have anything more to do than to render the most general countenance in favour of religion. How few are they in any church who feel the responsibility of labouring for the conversion of sinners as a specific thing to be done! How few are they who feel any responsibility for keeping up meetings for social prayer! How few are they, among those who are well qualified, who feel under obligation to engage in Sabbath-school instruction! How few are they, and even amongst those who will not refuse to contribute to the object when applied to, who feel under personal obligation to originate any movement for the promotion of the objects of Christian benevolence, or to be the well-known and efficient patrons of the institutions which contemplate the conversion of the world! On the minds of the few these obligations are deeply and permanently felt: on the mass, even of professed Christians, it is feared they are not felt; by the mass certainly they are not regarded.

2. I will proceed then to show the place which the individual Christian may occupy and should occupy in the promotion of the cause of religion. The statement must be a brief one.

First: every professing Christian, with whatever denomination he may be connected, bears a portion of the honour and the responsibility of religion in the world. He is a part of that total church which the Saviour came to redeem, and which is declared by Him to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth; and to which He has issued the commandment to preach the Gospel to every creature.

Whatever there is of honour, of purity, of truth, of respectability in that church, is in part intrusted to his hands, as to each freeman in a republic is committed a portion of the honour of his country, to each soldier in an army a portion of the honour of her flag. When he became a member of that church, by the very nature of the transaction a portion of its honour was intrusted to him, and by the same transaction he assumed a portion of its responsibility. In his profession of religion he identified himself with the Lord Jesus and with His cause. He left the community of the world, and united himself with the fraternity of Christians. He abandoned of choice the associations where amusement, and wealth, and vanity, and pleasures are all that is sought, for that community where religion is primary, and where men bind themselves to live unto God. He left the abodes of sensuality and of song, came out of the halls where are music and dancing, forsook the tents of wickedness, and voluntarily entered the temple over whose doors is inscribed "Holiness to the Lord," and became a dweller in that city, the holy city of Zion, whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise. I say he did it of choice. No man forced him to do it. Nor father, nor mother, nor pastor, nor friend, nor foe compelled him to become a member of the Christian church. It was among the most free acts of his life, in many instances among the most deliberate and carefully weighed. In many cases it was the result of warm gushing emotion, in all it was the result of choice, when he came and pledged himself over the sacred emblems of the body and blood of Christ to lead a holy life. Now, into such a community what right has any one to bring a worldly spirit? Why should any one voluntarily enter into such an association only to live to himself? What right has he to withdraw from his brethren to spread around him the maxims and feelings which pertain to the world, to refuse to co-operate

with those who are endeavouring to maintain the common cause? How can he forget, moreover, that there is always a part of the world which will form their idea of the nature of religion from the conduct of the private members of the church? They form it not from the Bible; for many never read the Bible. They form it not from what is stated in the pulpit; for many never enter the sanctuary; and if they do, they say that religion is not what is taught, but what it is seen to be in the lives of its friends. They form it not wholly from the lives of the ministers of the Gospel; for they say that preachers are professionally holy, and that it is their business to be religious; and perhaps they may charitably add, that they are paid for it, and that their very living depends on it. They form not their views of religion from the lives and deaths of the martyrs. Many of these have never heard the names of the martyrs, and the world cares little how Ignatius and Cranmer felt at the stake. But they form their impressions of the nature of religion from the lives of the individual members of the church,—their honesty, and integrity, and fidelity, their temper and consistent zeal in that noble cause which they have voluntarily embraced,—and judge of religion by what they see there.

Second: every Christian has facilities for doing something in the cause of the Redeemer, which no other one has; and his individual influence and talent are demanded in that cause. A father has an influence over the little circle where he presides, which no other man can have; and that influence, if he is a Christian, belongs to Christ, and is that on which He much relies for the promotion of His cause in the world. A mother has an influence within that narrow but sacred enclosure, which is as valuable and controlling as it is interesting and tender. No artificial forms of society can create it elsewhere: no law, no fashion, no art. This too belongs to Christ. So the physician, so the teacher, so

the magistrate, so the eloquent advocate, so he who has been trained in the schools of learning, so he who is endowed with eminent gifts by his Maker. There is an influence which each man possesses, which is of value to the cause of virtue and religion; and that individual influence the Redeemer claims in its proper sphere as His, to be employed in the promotion of His cause in the world. On any one man, in proportion to his ability, the claim is as imperative as on another; and the fact that you have any peculiar facility for doing good imposes the obligation so to employ it. And the work which you are to do need not be that which amazes the world by the eloquence of a Massillon or a Whitefield. Not that which lays the foundation of undying fame by the reasoning powers of an Edwards. Not that which moves nations, and effects a sudden change in human affairs by such mighty efforts as those of Luther or Knox. Not that which produces a new and enduring organization of men, like the far-seeing sagacity and the piety of Wesley. It may be the noiseless and unobtrusive daily work of doing your duty in a family, of teaching a class of little children in a Sunday School, of visiting a cottage of poverty and want, of putting quietly a little tract into the hand of a neighbour or a stranger, of going to your closet, and there, unobserved by men, pleading for the salvation of a world.

Third. Success in promoting religion in the world depends on personal and individual effort. There are no armies which secure a victory in the battle-field, but such as are made up of individuals. There are no cities, towns, palaces, navies, or bulwarks of war, but such as are the work of individuals. The victory of Nelson at Trafalgar depended, perhaps more than on anything else, on the magic power of the watchword of the day, "England expects every man to do his duty." "All at work, and always at work," was the signi-

ficant and characteristic motto of John Wesley ; and to the principle which prompted this, under the Divine blessing, can be traced the far-spread and happy results of the labours of the denomination of Christians of which he was the founder. In building the immense coral reefs of the South Seas, each insect assiduously labours while life lasts, and the vast work is done by individual effort. In our own land, these forests have been levelled, and these cities built, and these canals and railroads made, and these farms have opened their bosoms to the sun and rain, and these gardens make the air fragrant, and these ships whiten every sea, because an immense population has been individually at work.

It is just so in religion. Salvation is an individual work, and destruction is an individual work. Satan plies his powers not on a community as an abstract thing, but on the individual, as if there were but one, and as if he had nothing else to do but to ruin that one soul. The man that becomes an infidel is an individual. The young female that is seduced from virtue is an individual. The young men that are made intemperate or licentious are individuals ; and there is as definite and distinct a work in reference to each one, as if he were the solitary dweller on the earth. When the great tempter approached the bowers of Eden, he felt that if he was to be successful he must approach the mother of mankind as an individual, he must find her alone. So the great poet sings :—

“ He sought them both, but wished his hap might find
Eve separate: he wished, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veiled in a cloud of fragrance where she stood
Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glowed.

‘ Behold alone,’ said he,

‘ The woman opportune to all attempts;

Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh.’

So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad ! and toward Eve
Addressed his way."—"Paradise Lost," b. ix.

And ever since the work of destruction has been, and must be, a work on individual minds.

And so in the salvation of men. It is a work that pertains to individuals. Christ died for individuals. And each one who is brought to heaven is to be renewed, sanctified, guided, defended, as if he were alone. That child in your family is to be converted. That member of your Sunday School class is to be saved. That brother is to be renewed. That sister, daughter, wife, is to be brought to love the Saviour. These thousands and tens of thousands round about us are individuals, and are to be saved as such. In each case it is an individual work. It is not a vague, intangible, unmeaning, and abstract generality. It is the work of saving individual sinners from the horrors of eternal despair ; and each one is to be saved by the same anxiety, and effort, and prayer, as if he were alone.

There is a fourth and final remark which I will make in accordance with the views advanced in this discourse. It is this, that there is a large field of Christian effort, in which, without sacrificing any principle pertaining to you as an individual, you may co-operate with others in promoting the great end of all social organization. You labour on your own farm, or in your own workshop, or in your own office or study, and promote your own welfare and the good of your family. Yet, in entire consistency with your own individual plans, you unite with your neighbours in building a bridge, or making a road for the public good, in erecting a school-house where your children may be educated together, or in building a chapel where you may worship God. You have your own views of poetry, architecture, and the arts. You have your own ways of tilling your ground, and your own theory about the succession of

crops, and about the time of sowing your wheat. You build your barn and your apiary in your own way ; and yet you can unite with your neighbour in promoting education, and temperance, and the love of peace ; for then you meet on common ground. You are a Calvinist, and in your own place may maintain and enjoy your views of religion, and seek to promote them, and defend them, when you are attacked, in the best way you can. Another is an Arminian, and with equal freedom has a right to maintain his own principles, and make them the basis of his joys and hopes. But still there are more vital points in which you agree than those are in which you differ, and you may stand up side by side in defending your common Christianity in opposition to all Infidels, Jews, Greeks, or Mohammedans ; in distributing the Bible, the charter of your common hopes ; in maintaining everywhere the doctrine of human depravity, the fact of the Atonement, and the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and the duty of holy living. You are a Presbyterian, not from chance, and not because you deem your principles of no value and not worth defending ; and yet with Methodist and Episcopal and Baptist brethren, and with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, you can see that there is common ground which you can take in regard to the government of God and the Atonement, and the character of man, and the nature of true religion, and the doctrines of future retribution. Here we may stand together, compromising no principles, affecting not our influence as individuals, but blending our power into one, as beams of light come out from the sun and mingle together, pouring the flood of day on these worlds, yet capable, if we choose to do it, of being divided by the prism into red, and orange, and yellow, and green, and blue, and indigo, and violet, and all made up, in fact, of such rays ; or as many little individual rivulets hasten down from the *mountains to form the mighty river, as it rolls on to the ocean.*

SERMON II.

THE GREAT SEPARATION.

"I AM come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."
—Matthew x. 35.

THE subject which is suggested by these words is, THE GREAT SEPARATION WHICH RELIGION MAKES IN FAMILIES. The Saviour, in the text, simply states a fact. He does not say that He *aimed* at such a separation ; or that it was in itself desirable ; or that religion would be responsible for it ; or that there would be no possibility of avoiding it: He states the fact simply as it would occur,—evidently in His view a lamentable fact, and one that would be attended sooner or later with unhappy results. The union of families is desirable. It is such an object as the "Prince of peace" would seek. But the meaning of the Saviour in the text is, that His religion, by calling out one part of a family from another, would in fact tend to divide them, and would be the innocent cause of alienation. "I am come," said He, "to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law ; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Endeavouring to keep the spirit of these words in view, and to pursue such a line of thought as shall best illustrate them, I shall invite your attention to two points.

- I. The union of families in religion is desirable. And,
- II. Religion in fact often separates them.

I. The union of families in religion is desirable ; or, in other words, it is desirable that a family should be all united in the same faith, and in the same hope of heaven.

Before suggesting the reasons for this,—which indeed appear obvious almost without argument or illustration,—I would observe, that in other subjects than religion separations often occur in a family which create no evil, and which are in fact unavoidable. They are such as relate to the professions and callings in life, the daily avocations in the domestic circle, or the separation of a family when children advance to years of maturity. There is often much *painfulness* attending such separations ; but there is no blame, and no injury is done to individual interests, or to society at large. In the distinct departments of labour pursued by the husband and wife ; in the different professions which the father and his sons may follow, in the separations which occur when one is a merchant, another a physician, another a lawyer, a fourth a clergyman, a farmer, or a mariner, no injury is done ; no alienation of feeling of necessity occurs. The great interests of society are not endangered ; nor need the harmony of a family be disturbed ; for its affairs move on like machinery, where every wheel has its place, and where the revolution of one promotes the beautiful action of the whole.

If religion were something of this description, and affected no more vital interests than these different callings, the same thing might occur in regard to it, and no more injury would follow, were one member of a family a Christian, another an atheist, another a scoffer ; were one member to delight in prayer, and another to disregard it ; one to love the Bible, and another to regard it as a cheat and an imposture. What is there in religion, it may be asked, which makes it so much more desirable that the members of a family should be united in that than in their professional pursuits ?

What is there that makes separation a subject of special regret? I shall submit a few considerations which are so obvious that they will probably at once occur to your own minds; at any rate they will commend themselves to you as true. They are these.

1. Union in a family on the subject of religion is desirable, because all its members have the same interests at stake. It is not here as it is in regard to worldly matters. The same great object, substantially, may be obtained in a family, in worldly matters, in separate callings in life. Happiness, health, property, respectability, may be secured, though one be a farmer, another a merchant, another a mechanic, another connected with one of the liberal professions. Indeed, so nicely is this adjusted and balanced by the Great Disposer of events, that it is to this day a question with every young man still undecided, though the experiment has been made some thousands of years, which of these callings furnish the most favourable field for the attainment of these objects. Either of them is still open as an ample and honourable department, where the great objects sought in the present life may be gained. But no such remark can be made in reference to the differences in religion. Neither reason, experience, nor the Bible, furnish any evidence that the same things in regard to man's immortal welfare can be obtained where there are radically different views in religion; or that the Christian, the impenitent sinner, the infidel, the scoffer, and the atheist, though in the same family, can equally secure the favour of God. The history of the world has furnished impressive lessons on these points, and the Bible abundantly confirms all that history has taught.

In reference to religion, all the members of a family have substantially the same interests at stake. The soul of one is of the same value as that of another, and is to be saved,

if saved at all, in the same way. Each one has been redeemed by the same blood ; and each one is advancing to the same judgment bar. Pardon, needed equally by all, is to be obtained by each in the same manner ; and, being obtained, will confer the same peace on all. In a family there is no reason why the wife should be a Christian and the husband not ; why the father or the mother should be the friend of the Saviour, and the son or daughter not ; or why the sister should seek her happiness in the hope of heaven, and the brother feel that he has resources which can compensate for this, though he is not a Christian. Neither the husband, the son, the daughter, nor the brother, can secure the salvation of the soul without religion, any more than the wife, the father, the mother, or the sister. As they have the same great *interests* at stake, it is desirable that they should be united in religion.

2. It is desirable because they are all under substantially the same obligation. That obligation may be slightly varied by age, or capacity, or the relation sustained, but it rests substantially on all. There is no special obligation which binds a wife to love God, which does not rest also on the husband ; there is none which claims the affection of a sister, which does not also demand the heart of a brother ; there is none which is laid upon the child, which is not also upon the parent. Of the husband whose wife is a Christian, no one can show, that God has exempted him from the duty to which she responds ; of the parent who has sons or daughters in the church, no one can show that he is exempt from the duty which they feel resting on them. If one is bound to love God, so is the other ; if the father, so is the son ; if the mother, so is the daughter ; if the daughter-in-law, so is the mother-in-law. The claim is the same, and for the same reason. It rests on the broad basis of the duty which all men owe to their Maker;

and, so far as *obligation* is concerned, it is desirable that a family should be united in religion.

3. Such union is desirable in order to promote the happiness of a family ; for religion enters more deeply into the things that promote or mar domestic enjoyment than anything else. Other differences, as has already been intimated, do not necessarily produce a jar, or lead either to alienation or to anxiety. A son may be a merchant or a lawyer, while the father is a farmer, and the separation shall produce no alienation, and cause no regret or solicitude. All the wishes of the father's heart may be gratified in his virtuous life, and in the honour which a son of rising worth and reputation shall reflect on the family. But this cannot occur in religion. A Christian father can never have such feelings in the contemplation of the fact that his son is an infidel, or a mere neglecter of religion. All the father's hopes are identified with his religion, and all his expectations that his children will ever be happy are identified with that also ; and when there is not reason for that hope in regard to the child, there must be anxiety in proportion to the sense which the parent has of the value and importance of religion. Accordingly, it is a fact with which every one is familiar, that there is nothing that enters so deeply into the happiness of a family as unity of religious views ; and, of course, nothing that will so much mar the peace of a family as discord on this subject. So important has this been usually regarded, that it has been felt that every sacrifice, but that of conscience, should be made to secure this union ; and that in the case of a husband and wife attached to different denominations, one of them should be willing to sacrifice the preference, if it can be done with a good conscience, that they may "walk to the house of God in company."

Besides, religion is as needful to the happiness of one

member of a family as another. If it has a good effect on the temper of a wife, it would also have on that of the husband. If it sustains one in times of trial, it would also the other. If it enables one to meet the rebuffs of adverse fortune with a calm spirit, it would enable the other to do it also. If it makes one serene and cheerful in the prospect of approaching death, or when a child is laid in the grave, what shall forbid us to suppose that it would minister the same consolation to the other also?

4. In like manner, unity in religion in a family is desirable to promote the happiness of those who *are* Christians. In most of the families that compose the congregations associated for public worship, there is one or more who is a sincere Christian. The happiness of such is in religion. Their most intense and ardent aspirations are for heaven—for themselves, and for their friends. Their feelings of solicitude in behalf of their families are indeed often unknown to others. They are sometimes—often, I believe—criminally negligent in making them known: but there are often difficulties in the way which they cannot overcome. It is not easy for a daughter who has the most intense solicitude for the salvation of a father, to express that desire to *him*; and there *may* be cases where, if a wife were to express the wishes of her heart to her husband, she may be certain that it would be met with a sneer, a witticism, a rebuke, or with most withering indifference. Even a mother may have so frequently pressed the subject on the attention of her sons, and may have so exhausted all the sources of appeal at her command, that she may have become disheartened, and feel almost the effort would be vain. Yet, though silent, the solicitude of the wife and the mother is not extinguished. It may no longer be manifest, as it once was, to the husband or the son. It is now poured forth in the closet; and the appeal is trans-

ferred from their closed ears and hardened hearts to an ear that is never closed, a heart that never ceases to feel. Now, if a child desired to pour into the bosom of a tender parent the purest, sweetest, most enduring joy, he would become a Christian. If a husband so loved the partner of his bosom as to desire to promote her happiness in the highest degree, he would become a Christian ; for there is nothing else that will make a family so blessed ; no increase of wine or oil will diffuse such deep-felt and permanent bliss around the fireside.

5. Unity in religion in a family is desirable, in order to give consolation in times of affliction. Nothing is more common than the breaking up of a family circle. No securities that we can throw around our domestic comforts, can save them from the entrance of sickness and death. The ranks of all families will be broken. Death comes. A husband, a father, a mother, a child is removed, and the survivors go forth and weep together. They have common sorrows. There is no jar, no discord there. The same chord has been struck in each heart, and the tones of its vibration are deep and long. In their affection for the departed, and in their sorrows, there is entire harmony of feeling. But not so in their consolations. One heart acquiesces in God, even in the unsearchable mysteries of His dealings, and feels that all is right. That heart is calm, and rests on the unfailing promises. The eye of that weeper looks up through tears to heaven, and the Father of mercies regards the desire of the suppliant, and gives peace. But not so with all. Another heart may have no consolation. It may be full of murmuring, and repining, and rebellion. There is no submission, and no looking to God. Nothing is seen by the eye of this one, but clouds and darkness. Not a ray penetrates the gloom ; not even momentary respite and consolation visits

the soul. Now religion would have made all that weeping circle calm and submissive. It would have met their common sorrows by common joys; and though afflicted here together, yet they could have looked forward to a world where they would rejoice together, where all tears shall be wiped from every face.

6. Once more. Unity in religion in a family is desirable, in order to promote the eternal welfare of all. There is no reason to believe that one can be saved in one way, and another in another. There is but one path that leads to heaven, and that is a "strait and narrow" one. It accords not with reason any more than it does with the Bible, to suppose that one can be saved by Christian piety, and another by infidelity; that faith will conduct one to the skies, and the want of it another; that he who prays has a well-founded hope of glory, and that he has the same ground of hope who does not pray; that the righteousness of the Redeemer is the robe by which one is to be clothed in heaven, and that the morality of another is to constitute the "white garment" in which he will appear on the banks of the river of life; that one is to be borne up to receive the crown, ransomed by the blood of Jesus, and with the song of salvation on his lips as he ascends, and that another, who is a reviler, and a scoffer, and a blasphemer, is to ascend to the same world of glory, borne on the wings of imprecations and curses. Not thus do men ascend to the skies. If anything is clear from the Bible, and from all the deductions of reason, it is that they who have different characters in this world must meet a different doom in the next, and that this great principle *cannot* be set aside by all the tenderness of ties in the domestic relation. The mere fact that we are united there in love and interest,—that the most tender of all cords bind the heart of a Christian father even to an impenitent child, cannot, and

should not, abrogate the great law by which God purposes to save men ; and unless to every other tie there be added the "unity of the faith" and "the bond of Christian peace," there cannot be hope of unity in heaven. Yet I need not say one word to show how desirable it is that an entire family should be prepared to enter into heaven. Is there any one of our children on whom we can look but with overwhelming emotions of horror with the anticipation that he will be at the left hand of the Judge, and is to "dwell with devouring fire" for ever ? Christian fathers, mothers, ye who hope in the mercy of the Lord, the affairs of this world are *trifles light as air* when this thought enters the soul. What think ye of the gaiety and vanity, of the worldliness and want of religion, of the neglect of prayer in your closets and in your families, which may be the means of separating a child from your side at the bar of God ; which may unclinch your hand from the hand of a son there ; which may sunder the embrace of mother and daughter there for ever, that the daughter and the son "may go away into everlasting punishment?"

II. My second object was to show that religion does in fact make a separation in families. You will not suppose that I design to attempt to *prove* this. The fact is too apparent to make an attempt at demonstration proper. I design, under this head, merely to suggest some of the circumstances where religion makes such a separation.

1. It divides families at the communion table. There are, indeed, in our congregations, perhaps generally, some three or four families all of whose members are communicants in the church, and there are about as many not one of whose members is a professed friend of Christ. But the body of communicants in the churches is made up of *divided families* ; not divided in the sense of alienation and jealousies and heartburnings ; not divided, it may be,

unless in quite rare instances, in the sense that any portion of the families is sceptical or profane. But they are divided in a more important sense than any mere temporary estrangement would be, or any alienation founded on a reference to worldly concerns. It is a division *that has reference to religion* ; where the welfare of the soul is at stake, and which bears upon vital and eternal interests.

Now, I will not say that in all cases it is true religion which makes this separation at the communion table. I will not venture to affirm that *all* who come to the Lord's Supper in the churches are true Christians ; nor will I say that all who do not have no evidence of piety. On these points my subject requires me to make no affirmation, and I would not dare to do it, for it is not given to man to search the heart. But there are two considerations which may without impropriety be suggested here, and which demand the attention of all who do not make a profession of religion.

(1.) The first is, that *so far as the evidence goes* in the observance of the Lord's Supper, it is *true religion* that makes the difference between those who commune and those who do not. The fact of coming to the communion table, and of professing attachment to the Saviour, is the *public* proof, or *primâ facie* evidence, that they who do it are Christians. I know, indeed, that the proof is not infallible : but *so far as it goes* it is proof, and is good evidence, unless it can be rebutted by showing that the life proves that there is no true religion. To make a profession of religion is and should be regarded as in itself an expression of a desire to do the will of God, to give up the heart to the Saviour, to lead a Christian life, to be prepared for heaven. The profession has been also made in most cases after much anxious inquiry, after much examination of the heart and of the Bible, and after much

prayer to be guided aright; and has about all the security that there can be that it is based on the possession of real piety. No selfish motive in our land is likely often to influence men to make the profession, for it is followed by no recompense of office or gain; and if there is deception, it is to be set down to the credit of the liability of human nature to deception, and to the difficulty of determining what the real state of the heart is, even after much examination.

(2.) The second thing is, that your neglecting or refusing to make a profession of religion, is a *public* proof of the same kind, and of the same force, that you are not Christians. This may not, I admit, be infallible. There may be some recently converted who wisely and prudently defer the profession for the present, that they may examine and test their piety. There may be some who *should* have connected themselves with the people of God, but whose evidence of piety is not as clear as they desired and as they hope it will be. But my idea is this: that your refusing to make a profession of religion is evidence, *so far as it goes*, that you are not a Christian; it is the *public proof* that you are not. It is naturally and properly so interpreted by your fellow men. It is the construction which they must, will, and do put on it, and a construction which it is difficult to avoid, and, perhaps, which you do not wish them to avoid. Why may it not amount, in many cases, to full evidence, so full as to be the public proof in the day of judgment, of the want of religion? Why should we, from mere blind charity, kind-hearted as it may be, ascribe to a man that which he does not profess to have? Why give him the credit of possessing love to God and to the Saviour, and of being influenced by the principles of religion, when he makes no such profession himself? Does that charity which is so commended in the

New Testament, require us to go beyond what a man himself professes, and to put an interpretation on his principles which he himself forbids? The natural and fair inferences in regard to a man are, that when he professes to have no religion, he has none; that when he voluntarily separates himself from his Christian friends, he has no sympathy with them in their religion; that when he declines to obey a command of the Saviour which is simple, plain, obvious, universal in its obligation, and easy to be complied with, there is no principle of religious obedience in his heart. As a general rule, I know not why we should not abide by this simple principle, and why we should not regard those who *profess* to have no religion as having none,—whatever we may think of those who do. This rule is certainly in accordance with the principles of the Saviour. “He that is not with Me is against Me.” “He that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” If these remarks be correct, then the truth of what I have stated is established, that, to a great extent, the division which is made at the communion table is a division made by religion, and that the line which is run there is one of fearful portent in regard to the destiny in the future world.

2. There will be less doubt in regard to a second separation which religion makes in families. It is in reference to the grave. It requires the exercise of large charity to believe that all families in the tomb sleep there with the same prospect of future glory. They may occupy the same dark house, and be arranged side by side, close to each other as they were when living; or they may sleep in neighbouring graves, and a small enclosure railed round with iron, or set thick with flowers,—an enclosure smaller than the area of the house where they dwelt in the land of the living,—may hold them in close connexion in the abodes of the dead. But what shall make us believe that:

they all sleep there with the same prospect of heaven? What is our evidence that religion has made no separations there? Our nature prompts us—and I know not that our religion forbids it—to a more tender and wider charity for the dead than for the living; but the widest charity that is consistent with the maintenance of *any* religious principle whatever, can very rarely discern the evidence that *all* the members of a family die in hope. Religion made a difference while living: it made a difference in their plans of life; in their principles of action; in their conversation and deportment; in times of temptation and affliction, and on the bed of death: and why does it not perpetuate that difference in the grave? Is there some magic virtue, some potent charm, in being put into the same vault, the same coffin, or the same grave; in having the same solemn vestments, and in mingling with the same mother earth, to change the character or the destiny? Surely no one can pretend this; and what shall then hinder the conclusion that the division in the family which religion begins here, reaches down to the tomb? There might be much, could we see all, that would be melancholy in looking on a family burying-place, besides what meets the eye. Of the smiling babe that was laid there, Christian hope entertains no doubt that the soul is safe; of the Christian father, mother, or child that sleeps there, there is as little doubt. But what is the doom of the others? Here faith and hope are speechless; and a double pall rests on their remains.

3. There is less doubt still in regard to a third separation which religion makes. If there is not absolute certainty in regard to the effect of religion in causing the division at the communion table; if there is still uncertainty of an increasingly painful character in regard to the separation in the grave, there can be none of the agency of

religion in the divisions of the day of judgment and of the future world. Here there is no room for conjecture; none for doubt. If the line run at the communion table be not the true line; if we are deceived about the dead, and hope when there is no ground for hope, and fear when there was really no reason to fear, yet the line will be drawn at the judgment bar with unerring accuracy. That line will be *so* drawn that the universe will see and approve the reason why it is done; *and it is a line which will be run wholly by religion.* On this point the Scriptures leave us no room to doubt; and the account in the Bible is one that wholly accords with our own reason, that it is *religion* that is to make the separation there. It will not be beauty or blood: not rank, station, or wealth: not bodily vigour, learning, or accomplishments: not age, or fame. These things do not trace lines on the human character or destiny that continue beyond the grave. They are obliterated before the earth is made smooth over the graves of the prince and the peasant; or before the surface of the sea becomes calm, when beauty, and rank, and youth, are engulfed beneath; when,

“ Like a drop of rain,

Man sinks into the depths with bubbling groan,

Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.”

But religion *makes* a separation at the judgment, makes THE GREAT SEPARATION FOR EVER. It makes a division there in such a manner that there shall be no future union. It places at the one hand of the Judge a father, and at the other a son; at the one hand a mother, and at the other a daughter; in one world a parent who sought the conversion and salvation of his children, and in the other those children, neglectful, impenitent, unbelieving. The time is coming when one portion of a family, redeemed and sanctified, shall ascend to heaven, elevated to its

glories by the religion of the Redeemer ; the other portion will live on, indeed, but in the GREAT SEPARATION THAT IS TO BE ETERNAL. To this all things tend. Every communion hastens it ; every closing year, every month, every week, every Sabbath, every day. To-day it has been determined in relation to multitudes who have left the earth for eternity ; ere the shades of this night pass away, it will be determined in regard to multitudes more.

The subject is one that cannot be pursued further without exciting emotions that would produce pain without profit. My object in presenting it will be gained if it secures two or three results which I will now state in the conclusion of the discourse.

1. If it leads Christians here to feel more deeply, and to pray more fervently, for their impenitent children, partners in life, parents, and friends. To-day you are separate from them. They evince no love for our great and blessed Redeemer. How natural, how proper, to ask whether they are to be separate in the grave, and for ever, as well as in the church on earth ! How appropriate to bear them on our hearts when *we* are near the cross ; and to beseech, even with tears, the Redeemer to have mercy on those whom we tenderly love !

Friends of the Saviour ! ye who can scarcely bear the thought of separation from your children for a month or a day, how can you think of being separated from them for ever ? Ye parents who are sleepless with anguish when they suffer on a bed of pain, who watch with earnest solicitude over them in the slow-moving hours of night, how can you bear the thought that they are to suffer on for ever and ever ? Ye who would start with horror at the thought of their sinking into a watery grave, or at the idea that they would be wrapped in flame in a burning vessel at sea, how can you be unmoved at the *possibility* that they

may sink in an ocean of fire, to roll amidst its billows for ever? Rouse, parents, rouse! Awake, arise, and call upon your God that they may be saved!

2. If the subject leads those who are not now Christians to similar reflections, it will accomplish another object which I wish. Among those of you who do not profess to be Christians, are husbands separate from your wives, parents from your children, children from your parents. From that father, and that mother, who have consecrated their hearts to the Son of God, and from that Saviour to whom they have devoted themselves, you are divided. Shall this continue? Shall it be deepened and prolonged until it terminates *in the great separation that shall endure for ever*? Dear objects of our earthly affection, friends whom we love more tenderly than we love any other friends, why not come and let heart beat against heart in love to the same Redeemer, and walk hand in hand with us in the same path to heaven? How can you bear the thought of an eternal separation from your Christian friends? Divided in religion from us, yet you are not divided in affection. Without our hope of heaven, yet you love us; and though with different feelings in regard to the prospect of eternity, yet at home, at the table, at the fireside, in affliction, in joy, your heart beats against ours, and the same chord is struck in our souls and yours. Children of pious parents, parents of pious children, husbands of pious wives, how can you bear the thought of an eternal separation from your friends? How can you think of their walking on the banks of the river of life, happy spirits, while you wander—wretched outcasts—on the plains of despair? How can you think that all these tender ties are to be torn asunder, and that you are to be banished from them for ever and ever? Friends that we love! awake! arise! and call upon our God! Seek

the salvation of the soul ! O let the love begun on earth be perpetuated on the plains of heaven ! Save us, O save us, we beseech you, from seeing you driven away from us, that we may behold your faces no more !

3. A third result to which our subject should lead should be to cause us to look forward to the future world, and to contemplate the possibility that a family should be *united in heaven*. It is *possible* that there should be such an eternal union. It is not necessary that religion should make an eternal separation. There is nothing in the nature of Christianity that naturally and necessarily demands this. There is no such adaptation of the Gospel to one member or portion of a family only as to make such a result inevitable ; there is no restricting of the offer of salvation to the father, the mother, or to one of the children of a family ; there is no limitation of the efficacy of the atonement which makes it impossible that the blood which saves one should save all ; there is no such circumscribing of the power of the Holy Spirit that He can renew and sanctify only a portion of the family group. The blood which has been sprinkled on one heart may cleanse all ; the same Spirit that hath renewed and sanctified the father or mother is able to renew and sanctify each child ; and the same grace of the Gospel which prepared that loved and lovely sister who has been taken from you to walk by the side of the river of life in white raiment, can prepare you also to join with her and walk arm in arm on those shady banks. Look upward to yonder heavens. See there your smiling babe ! It stretches out its hands, and invites you. "Come, father, mother," is its sweet sound, "come and take the water of life." May not that same grace of the Gospel which has raised that child to heaven, save you also ?

Why should it not be ? A whole family united in reli-

gion,—what a spectacle of beauty on earth ! A family lying side by side in their graves, to be united again in the same blessed resurrection,—what a spectacle for angels to look down upon with interest ! A whole family united in heaven,—who can describe their everlasting joys ? Not one is absent. Nor father, nor mother, nor son, nor daughter, are away. In the world below they were united in faith, and love, and peace, and joy. In the morning of the resurrection they ascended together. Before the throne they bow together in united adoration. On the banks of the river of life they walk hand in hand, and as a family they have commenced a career of glory that shall be everlasting. *There is to be* hereafter no separation in that family. No one is to lie down on a bed of pain. No one is to wander away into temptation. No one is to sink into the arms of death. Never in heaven is that family to move along in the slow procession, clad in the habiliments of woe, to consign one of its members to the tomb. For no member of the family is the soil of heaven ever to open its bosom to furnish a grave. God grant of His infinite mercy that every family in this assembly may thus be united in religion in all the joys and sorrows of this life ; united when they lie down in the grave in the hope of the same resurrection ; and united on the banks of the river of life, to drink of the streams of salvation for ever ! AMEN.

SERMON III.

THE DEATH OF A MOTHER.

"I BOWED down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother."—

Psalm xxiv. 14.

THERE is a peculiarity in every kind of bereavement. There is enough to separate it from all other modes of trial, to produce a peculiar state of feeling, and to convey its own lessons to the soul distinct from those imparted by any other Divine dispensation. The loss of a wife, a friend, a companion, a sympathizer in trials, a fellow-heir of the grace of life, a sharer of the joys, and a divider of the sorrows, of our pilgrimage; of a son, who, we hoped, would be our stay and staff in old age, and perpetuate our name when we are dead; of a daughter, whom we have tenderly nourished and tenderly loved; of a sister, the companion of the playful days of childhood, and a kind friend as she advanced with us to the maturity of life; of a father, the counsellor and guide of our youth: each one of these bereavements has its own sad lesson to convey to the soul, each one touches a chord in the heart which vibrates only then. It is a part of our duty and discipline here, carefully to gather up these lessons, and apply them to our own souls.

In the text it is supposed, that the death of a mother affects those who are bereaved by her loss in a peculiar manner, and that such a loss is among the heaviest of sorrows. "I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." To see the force of this text, it is not necessary to suppose that this is the heaviest of all the sorrows which we can experience; nor is it necessary to make any comparison

between this and the other forms of bereavement which we may be called to endure. All that is necessary to say is, that there are chords of the soul touched then which have not been touched before, and will not be again. A man has but one mother to lose; and when such an event occurs, it is well for him to endeavour to learn the lessons which God, once in his life, designs to teach him.

It is the duty of a minister of the Gospel to adapt his teaching to all the relations of life, and to apply the lessons of religion to the various circumstances in which his hearers may be placed. At no one time, indeed, can it be supposed that any considerable part of his audience will feel an immediate interest in a topic of this kind. But there are usually enough who have been recently afflicted in this manner, to make such a topic of public discourse proper. Besides, how large a portion in a congregation is there, who have at some time been thus bereaved! How many are there here to-day who, at some period of their lives, have known what it was to lose a mother! It will be no injury to recall the memory of that scene, not for the purpose of opening wounds again, which time and religion may have healed, but to make more fresh in the recollection the lessons which God designed to convey by the living virtues and by the death of a mother. It may be useful, too, to those who *have* mothers from whom they may be soon called to part, to contemplate this relation, and to be told of the kind of emotions which spring up in the soul when a parent is taken away to be seen no more. It may teach you to prize their counsels and their friendship more; it may make you more careful not to pain their hearts by unkindness or disobedience.

I shall make no comparison between this relation and that of a father. That is, in many respects, as important and as influential as this; and when that is sundered, the bereavement as much demands the tribute of our tears, and

conveys as important lessons to the soul. Perhaps, in some cases, there may be more to affect the heart in such a loss ; for some of us may owe more to the inherited mental characteristics, and the example, and the direct teaching of a father, than we do to a mother. But though this may be so, the remarks which I propose to submit to you now will, I trust, be seen to be founded on truth. Without any very exact order, yet with such a general distribution of my thoughts as will be adapted, I hope, to make a distinct impression on the mind, I shall submit to you a few reflections on such a relation, and such a loss, which I trust may be fitted to be useful.

I. I need hardly say, that the relation of a mother is a peculiar relation, and has features which are found in no other. The tie is one which exists nowhere else, which can never be renewed, which, when it is sundered, is sundered for ever, unless it is cemented by religion, and grows up into eternal affection in the heavens.

Her affection for us begins at a period of which we have no recollection, and when we were not conscious that any being loved us. It was laid far back in her nature by a benignant Providence, to anticipate our helplessness and our wants as we came into the world. It began when as yet we had manifested no qualities of mind or heart to deserve affection ; when we were incapable of returning the tokens of her love ; when we could not give back the kiss that was so tenderly impressed upon us ; and when it was certain that the expressions of her lavished affection could not be remembered by us, should we ever reach a period when we should be capable of repaying appreciated kindness. It existed in her heart, whatever we were to be, or whatever was to be our fortune in this world ; and was so strong, that even could she have foreseen all our ingratitude, and all that

we might yet do to pain her, she would still have loved us, and perhaps her caresses would have been only the more tender while we were yet innocent, and our souls were uncontaminated by contact with evil. She met us as we entered on life, already prepared to do us good. Her first emotion toward us was that of love; and even then when we had no character and no claim for services rendered, when we had furnished no evidence that we ever would be worthy of her love, or repay her kindness with anything but ingratitude, she was ready to do for us, what we may have even now scarcely secured a friend to do by all our virtues. Not a friend have we now who would watch more patiently by our sick bed than she would have done by our cradle then; nor have we one who would sorrow more sincerely over our grave. This care we owed primarily to God, and under Him to that affection which He had created in her heart.

"Unnumbered comforts on my soul
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From whom these comforts flowed."

The affection thus laid in her heart to anticipate our necessities, was strengthened on her part by all her own toil, and care, and watchfulness, and sacrifices on our behalf. Whatever might be the effect on us, the effect on her was to make her love us more. Her own solicitude and toil became thus a measure of her augmented affection; for God has instructed us to love that much which is the fruit of sacrifice and toil. Her love for us was measured far more by her own sacrifices than by our own worth, or by any developed traits of character which seemed to justify her ardour of affection, though it was also strengthened on her part by everything in us—then estimated, perhaps, at more than twice its value,—which seemed to reward her care. On our part, the attachment formed is not that which grows out of favours rendered,

but favours received. It is laid, indeed, in nature ; but it grows up and expands because we receive so many benefits, because there is such an obligation of gratitude, because we learn more and more as we advance in years how much we owe to a mother.

The attachment for a mother is different from that which we have for a brother or sister. That may be exceedingly tender and pure. Indeed, there is nothing more pure in our relations than love for a sister. But it is formed in a different way. When the tie which binds us to her is severed, it cannot, indeed, be renewed ; it makes a sad desolation in the soul, but it is not precisely the sorrow which we have when we bow down, heavily mourning for a mother. We love a sister, for we began life together under the same roof, under the fostering care of the same parents. We played together in childhood, we shared the same gentle amusements, we went to the same school, we had the same father to counsel and guide us, and had the same mother to teach us to pray, and to give us the parting kiss at night. We grew up equally beloved by our parents, and we have learned to love each other much by mutual acts of affection and kindness.

The attachment is different from those friendships which we form as we advance in life. Those may be dear, and they may be stronger than that which binds to a mother ; but they are not the same. A man leaves father and mother, and cleaves to his wife with an affection more tender and strong than that formed by any natural relation ; but it is not the same. He forms strong friendships in life, like that which bound the hearts of David and Jonathan ; but such friendships did not begin as we entered on life, nor imbed themselves in the soft heart of infancy and childhood ; nor are they cemented by so many acts of kindness.

The attachment to a mother is different from that which we form for our children. It is what we expect of them rather than what we feel for them. We love them much, —even as she did us. But it is a love for them as our children, as dependent on us, as helpless, as needing our care and counsel, as a part of ourselves, as those who we hope will do us honour when we are dead. These attachments which we form in after life of nature and affection are strong and tender; they may be more immediately tender than those which we bear for a parent; grief may be poignant when they are sundered by death, and when we follow wife or child to the grave; but it has its own features distinct from that when a venerable and much loved parent is conveyed to the tomb. As there was a peculiarity of attachment, so there will be a peculiarity of sorrow, such as we are not to experience again.

II. I notice a second peculiarity of feature in this kind of bereavement. It is in the change which is produced by our ideas of *home*,—the home of our childhood and youth. When she lived there, there was always a home,—a place which in every situation of life we felt as such, and which we regarded as such.

In our childhood and youth, there was in that home where she was, one who always cared for us and for all that appertained to us. There was one who we were sure would take an interest in everything that we took an interest in, and whose ear we were certain would be open to listen to all our tales of childish success or of childish trouble. We were sure that she would take the same interest in it which we did; and we expected confidently that, whoever might be against us, she would be for us. We never had a doubt that she would listen to our tale of fright, of disappointment, of calamity, nor that she would feel just as we did about it. The matter might be in itself important or

unimportant, it might be dignified or undignified; yet we never doubted that she would regard it as important and as sufficiently momentous to claim her attention. We might have felt that it was not grave enough to tell a father about: we might have doubted whether he would suspend his more weighty employments to interest himself in our affairs: but we never had such a doubt for a moment about a mother. No matter what her employments or her cares, or what she might be interested in, we were sure she would be interested in us, and that in all our troubles we should find her our friend. We had our difficulties in the little world of childhood. Bigger and older boys struck us, or laughed at us, or reviled us, or surpassed us in learning, in running, or in skill; and in that little world we might have found no sympathy, and there was no other to whom we could unburden our aching heart. But we were sure that there was one who would sympathize with us, and who would be on our side. Our playmates derided us, and laughed at us, because we said in our simplicity, that we "would tell our mother." And yet it was philosophy, deep and pure, to do so, like the pure crystal spring that breaks out of the side of a hill in the uncultivated forest. It was what nature prompted to; for nature designed that she should know our troubles, and nature had formed for us such a friend there, that, whoever was against us, we knew that she would be on our side; whoever wronged us, she would not; whoever exulted over us, she would not join in the exultation. You may say that this is childish philosophy. So it may be; and the nearer our philosophy comes back to simple nature, as developed there, the nearer we shall be to truth. In our troubles we have always needed a friend who would sympathize with us, and to whom we might unburden all the sorrows of the soul. The disciples of John's Redeemer came and took up his murdered body,

and buried it, and went and told Jesus. (Matt. xiv. 12.) In Him they had a Friend tender and delicate above all a mother's feelings, who they were sure would sympathize with their sorrows; and what was more natural than that they should go and tell Him? So in the home of our childhood, it was dear to us as a home; for there was not a sorrow of our heart that we might not tell our mother.

Many of us—most of us who are advanced beyond the period of childhood—went out from that home to embark on the stormy sea of life. Of the feelings of a father, and of his interest in our welfare, we have never entertained a doubt; and our home was dear because he was there; but there was a peculiarity in the feeling that it was the home of our mother. While she lived there, there was a place we felt was home. There was one place where we would always be welcome; one place where we would be met with a smile; one place where we would be sure of a friend. The world might be indifferent to us. We might be unsuccessful in our studies or in our business. The new friends which we supposed we had made might prove to be false. The honour which we thought we deserved might be withheld from us. We might be chagrined and mortified by seeing a rival outstrip us, and bear away the prize which we sought; but there was a place where no rivalry was found, and where those whom the world overlooked would be sure of a friendly greeting. Whether pale and wan by study, care, or sickness, or flushed with health and flattering success, we were sure that we should be welcome there. Though the world was cold towards us, yet there was one who always rejoiced in our success, and always was affected in our reverses; and there was a place to which we might go back from the storm which began to pelt us, where we might rest and become encouraged and invigorated for a new conflict. So

have I seen a bird, in its first efforts to fly, leave its nest, and stretch its wings, and go forth to the wide world. But the wind blew it back, and the rain began to fall, and the darkness of night began to draw on, and there was no shelter abroad, and it sought its way back to its nest, to take shelter beneath its mother's wings, and to be refreshed for the struggles of a new day; but then it flew away, to think of its nest and its mother no more. But not thus did we leave our home when we bade adieu to it, to go forth alone to the manly duties of life. Even amidst the storm that then beat upon us, and the disappointments that we met with, and the coldness of the world, we felt sure that there was one there who sympathized in our troubles as well as rejoiced in our success, and that, whatever might be abroad, when we entered the door of her dwelling we should be met with a smile. We expected that a mother, like the mother of Sisera, as she looked out at her window, waiting for the coming of her son laden with the spoils of victory, would look out for our coming; and that our return would renew her joy and ours in our earlier days.

"O, in our sterner manhood, when no ray
Of earlier sunshine glimmers on our way;
When girt with sin and sorrow, and the toil
Of cares which tear the bosom that they soil:
O, if there be in retrospection's chain
One link that knits us with young dreams again,
One thought so sweet we scarcely dare to muse
On all the hoarded raptures it reviews,
Which seems each instant, in its backward range,
The heart to soften and its ties to change,
And every spring, untouched for years, to move,
It is—the Memory of a Mother's Love."

It makes a sad desolation, when from such a place a mother is taken away; and when, whatever may be the sorrows or

the successes in life, she is to greet the returning son or daughter no more. The home of our childhood may be still lovely. The old family mansion, the green fields, the running stream, the moss-covered well, the trees, the lawn, the rose, the sweet-brier, may be there. Perchance, too, there may be an aged father with venerable locks sitting in his loneliness with everything to command respect and love; but she is not there, her familiar voice is not heard. The mother has been borne forth to sleep by the side of her children who went before her, and the place is not what it was. There may be those there whom we much love; but she is not there. We may have formed new relations in life, tender and strong as they can be; we may have another home dear to us as was the home of our childhood, where there is all in affection, kindness, and religion to make us happy; but that home is not what it was, and it will never be what it was again. It is a loosening of one of the cords which bound us to earth; designed to prepare us for our eternal flight from everything dear here below, and to teach us that there *is* no place here that is to be our permanent home.

III. I notice a third thing in such an event which is fitted to convey a lesson to the soul, such as we always feel in bereavement, but which, like the other things adverted to, has a peculiarity of its own. I refer to a class of emotions often not less painful, and of a much more admonitory character, than those which I have adverted to, and which, such are our imperfections in all the relations of life, we are always destined to feel when a friend is removed by death. I mean the quickened recollections of our neglects, of our acts of unkindness, of our ingratitude, of our improper feelings in our intercourse with those whom we have lost.

What I now advert to is one of the most beautiful and

benignant laws of our nature; one of the most delicate arrangements to bring our guilt to remembrance, in order that we may exercise true repentance, and to prompt us to kindness and fidelity in the remaining relations of life.

This law of our nature, which cannot well be explained, except on the suppositions that there is a moral government, and that God designs that all our sins shall be brought to our remembrance, is this, that in the death of a friend we instinctively recall the wrongs that we may have done him; for some mysterious power seems to summon them up from the land of forgetfulness, and to cause them to pass in solemn procession before us. Things which we had forgotten, words which we long since uttered, but which had passed from the memory, expressions of irritated feeling, unjust suspicions, jealousies, neglect of the respect or the courtesies due in that relation of life, a want of attention when the heart of the friend was sad, want of sympathy in his successes or reverses,—all seem to revive as we stand around the open grave, and, as the coffin of the friend descends there, they are quickened into life as the dead man was by the bones of Elisha. How this is so, as a matter of moral administration, we may not be able to explain. Perhaps it is because, though conscious in the general that we had erred in that relation, we still hoped that the friend would somehow forgive us; but now he has gone to the grave, and now we can never ask him to pardon us. Perhaps it is that we look on him now as a sufferer, and pity his condition, and all his sources of sorrow seem summoned to aggravate his condition, and, among others, the wrongs that we have done arise to our views as a bitter ingredient in his cup of woes. Perhaps it is that God meant so to make the conscience that it would not always slumber, and designed that once at least it should do its appropriate work.

This law of our nature has been so beautifully described by one of our best American writers, that I can do nothing so well as to copy his words:—"O the grave, the grave! It buries every error, covers every defect, extinguishes every resentment. From this peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections. Who can look down, even upon the grave of an enemy, and not feel a compunctious throb that he ever should have warred with the poor handful of earth that lies mouldering before him? But the grave of those we loved, what a place for meditation! There it is that we call up in long review the whole history of the truth and gentleness, and the thousand endearments, lavished upon us almost unheard in the daily course of intimacy. There it is we dwell upon the tenderness of the parting scene, the bed of death with all its stifled grief, its noiseless attendants, its most watchful assiduities, the last testimonies of expiring love, the feeble, fluttering, thrilling. O how thrilling is the fluttering pulse, the last fond look of the glazing eye turning upon us from the threshold of existence, the faint faltering accent struggling in death to give one more assurance of affection! O, go to the grave of buried love, and there meditate! There settle the account with thy conscience of every past endearment, unregarded, of that departed being who never, never can be soothed by contrition. If thou art a child, and hast ever added a sorrow to the soul, or a furrow to the silvered brow, of an affectionate parent; if thou art a husband, and hast ever caused the fond bosom that ventured its whole happiness in thy arms to doubt one moment of thy kindness, or thy truth; or if thou art a friend, and hast injured by thought, by word, or deed, the spirit that generously confided in thee; if thou art a lover, and hast ever given one unmerited pang to the true heart that now lies cold beneath thy feet; then be sure that every unkind look, every ungracious word, every

ungentle action, will come thronging back upon thy memory, and knock dolefully at thy soul; be sure that thou wilt lie down sorrowing and repenting on the grave, and utter the unheard groan, and pour the unavailing tear, bitter because unheard and unavailing."

Who, I may add, ever saw an endeared friend die, and did not feel that there were things in his intercourse with him to regret, and for which he would now desire to ask forgiveness? Who ever saw a man die, of whom he had said hard things, or thought hard things, who did not lament that he had given indulgence to such words and feelings? Who ever attended one to the grave, friend or foe, partner or rival, with whom he had been at variance, who did not now wish it to be buried in oblivion? Who can carry his enmity to the grave? There, when a rival or foe is laid "earth to earth, ashes to ashes," dust to dust, we lay our animosities aside. There we feel that, whatever may be true of him whom we commit to the tomb, there was much in us that was wrong. And there we regret every unkind word, feel pained at the remembrance of every unkind thought, and mourn that we have done no more to impart happiness to the cold sleeper whom we are to see no more.

I said that this was a beautiful and benignant law of our nature, and, though attended like other laws, when violated, with pain, the design is as apparent as it is beautiful. It has two objects as a part of the Divine moral administration. One is to lead us to repentance for our errors and faults, that we may obtain pardon of our God before it is too late. True, the sleeper there cannot now utter the word of forgiveness. Those lips are for ever sealed in death; and how much would we give, could now we ask that friend to forgive us! How much would we rejoice, could we have the assurance from those lips that the faults that now come thronging on our memory were forgiven and

forgotten, and that they did not add a pang to his last sorrows? But if we cannot now confess the fault in the ear of that friend, if we cannot now hope that those lips will open to declare us forgiven, we may confess the fault to God, and may be assured that He will blot the remembrance of it from His book. Around each grave of a friend, therefore, He summons up groups of our past offences, that we may be humbled and penitent, and may not go unpardoned to eternity. The other design of this benignant law is to keep us from offending hereafter, to teach us to manifest kindness in the remaining relations of life. True, we cannot again injure, or offend, or pain the sleeper there. Whatever may be his condition now, he is where our unkindness or neglect will not reach or affect him. But we have other relations in life, perhaps equally tender and equally important. There are other hearts that may be made to bleed by ingratitude, or coldness, or neglect, or cruelty; and we may be assured that what has happened in the case of the friend that we have now lost will happen also in theirs. The design of the law is, to teach us to indulge no thought, to speak no word, to evince no feeling, which we would regret when they too are removed. And what a restraint would this be on our temper, our words, our whole deportment!

In each bereavement there is a peculiar group of these painful thoughts that come thronging to the recollection. They are those which are revived by that bereavement, but would be unaffected by any other. How many such things there are laid away in the chambers of the soul, now slumbering there like torpid adders, perhaps, hereafter to be quickened into life, to be our tormentors! The occasion requires me only to allude to that class of emotions which is thus summoned to our recollection on the death of a mother. And who is there of us that can see a mother die,

without many such painful and disquieting thoughts greatly embittering the natural grief of parting. Even while we were conscious of having had for her strong and tender love, even when in the main we desired to respect her and make her happy, even when we know that our general character has been approved by her, and that in life thus far we have not disappointed her fond anticipations; yet how many times in childhood have we been disobedient! how often have we spoken disrespectfully! how often have we disregarded her wishes! how often have we uttered sentiments peevishly that we knew differed from hers! how often have we failed in rendering that prompt and ready obedience which was due to her as a mother, and to her kindness to us! how many times by our perverseness, our self-will, our pride, our obstinacy, have we discouraged her in her efforts to do us good! how often have we done that which would weary out the patience of any but a parent and God! Could we hear her speak again, how many things are there which we would wish to confess, and which we would desire her to forgive!

There are lessons flowing from this subject adapted to those who are more particularly interested, from having recently been called to this trial,—lessons requiring us to submit to God, to be grateful for the example, and counsels, and toils in our behalf, of those who have been removed, to imitate them, as they imitate their Saviour, and to be prepared to follow them to the world of glory. But on these I will not dwell. There are two thoughts, however, which, in conclusion, I will suggest, addressed to two classes of my hearers.

1. The first relates to those who have had pious mothers who are now removed to heaven; but whose prayers and counsels they have disregarded. I refer to those who have thus far withheld their hearts from that Saviour whom their

mother loved, and with whom she now dwells, who have embraced sentiments such as they know she would not approve, who have made choice of companions such as she loved to warn them against, or who indulge in scenes of revelry and sin, such as, if she were living, you know would break her heart. Go, young man, and walk in the stillness of the evening among the graves. Beneath your feet in the sacred slumbers of a Christian death lies a much loved mother. How calm her slumbers! How sweet the spot! How lovely a mother's grave! How the memory delights to go back to the nursery, the fire-side, the sick bed, the anxious care of a mother! How it loves to recall her gentle look, her eye of love, her kiss at night! At that grave, thoughtless young man, think of thy revels, thy neglect of God, thy forgetfulness of the prayer that she taught thee, thy friendship now for those against whom she warned thee. She sleeps now in death, but from that grave is it fancy that we hear a voice? "My beloved son, is this the life that I taught thee to lead? Are these the pleasures which I taught thee to pursue? Did I bear thee, and toil for thee, and pray for thee, and wear out my life, that I might train thee for sin, and death, and hell?"

2. The other thought relates to those who now have a Christian mother, and who yet disregard her living counsels and prayers. I have adverted to a law of our being, beautiful in its nature, but painful in its inflictions. The day is coming when that mother will die. You may see her die, or far away you may hear of her death, and may return and visit her grave. Be thou sure that every unkind look, every disobedient action, every harsh word, will come back and visit thy soul. Be sure you will remember every thing that ever gave pain to her heart, and remember it with unavailing regret when too late to recall it, or to ask forgiveness. Be sure, if you are unkind and disobedient; if

you are an infidel or a scoffer ; if you slight her counsel, and neglect the God and Saviour to whom she would conduct you, there are laid up in the chambers of your soul the sources of bitter repentance hereafter ; and that you cannot find forgiveness of her whose heart you broke, though you seek it carefully with tears. And be sure that the sweetest of all consolations, when she dies, will be found in such love of her Saviour, that you will appreciate what is meant when it is said she has gone to heaven, and in evidence in your own heart, that you will be prepared when the summons comes to rejoin her in the realms of bliss

SERMON IV.

THE THEORY OF REVIVALS.

"DROP down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together."—Isaiah xlv. 8.

THIS beautiful passage of Scripture may be regarded partly as the expression of pious feeling, and partly as a prophetic description. It is the language of one who greatly desired an increase of piety, and who was accustomed to look forward to times when pure religion would shed abroad its influence on earth like descending showers from heaven. This prophet, more than any other one, fixed his eye on the times of the Redeemer, and he delighted to describe scenes which would occur when He should appear. With deep interest he threw himself amidst those future scenes, and with a heart full of faith he uttered the language of our text: "Pour down, ye heavens, from above, like descending showers, and, ye skies, distil righteousness like fertilizing rains; let the earth open her bosom, and let salvation spring forth as an abundant harvest."

From these words I propose to commence a series of discourses ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION. Several considerations have induced me to enter on the discussion of this subject. One is, that they are the most remarkable phenomena of our times, and that they have done more than any other single cause to form the public mind in this country. Large portions of the community have been shaken to their centre by these religious movements; and society has received some of its most decided directions from these deep and far-

pervading revolutions. Another reason is, that every Christian has the deepest interest in the question about revivals of religion. If they are the genuine work of God; if they accord with the statements in the Bible; if they are such results as he has a right to expect under the preaching of the Gospel, he is bound, by all the love which he bears to his Saviour and to the souls of men, to desire and pray for their increase and extension.

Another reason is, that there are many various and contradictory opinions in regard to these religious movements. It is not wonderful that, in a community where everything is subjected to free discussion, and every man is at liberty to form his own judgment, they should have given rise to great variety of opinion. By some they are regarded as the mere work of enthusiasm. By some they are supposed to be originated by a strain of preaching, and an array of measures adapted to operate on easily excited feelings, and fitted to influence only the weaker portions of the community, and to be unworthy the attention of the more refined and intelligent ranks of society. By others they are considered to be in accordance with all the laws of mind; regarded as having a foundation in the very nature of Christianity in its adaptedness to the world, as produced by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and as connected with the best hopes of mankind. Even among professed Christians it cannot be denied that some look upon them with distrust and alarm; others regard them as the glory of the age, and as identified with all that is cheering in the prospect of the conversion of the world to God. Some see in them the last hope of this republic against a tide of ills that is rolling in with rapid and desolating surges upon us; and some regard them as among the ills which religion, unsupported by the state, has produced in a country where all is wild, and free even to licentiousness. Perhaps there is scarcely any excitement of

the public mind that has produced deeper attention ; none that can by a Christian or a patriot be regarded as of higher moment, or as more likely to affect the best interests of man. The friend of revivals regards it as a fact of deep interest, that scarcely a village smiles upon the American landscape that has not been consecrated in its early history by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in a revival of religion. He discerns in the spire that points to heaven proof that that is a place, perhaps, more than once honoured by the presence of Israel's God. He sees in the reigning order, peace, and prosperity, proofs that the power of God has been felt there. He finds in its schools, its industry, its morals, its benevolence, demonstration that Christianity there struck its roots deep in some mighty work of God's Spirit ; and, as the result, is sending out branches bending with rich and mellow fruits. He can recall there some thrilling period in its history, when a spirit of prayer and seriousness gave its character to the growing village, and when, under the influence of such a revival, a moulding hand was extended over all the social habits of the place. If such is their influence, it is an act of mere justice that Christianity should not be deprived of the claims which it has on the gratitude of the nation ; it is a duty which we owe to ourselves and our country to understand and to appreciate causes so deeply affecting our welfare.

There is one other reason why I propose to bring this subject before you, and, indeed, the main reason which has operated on my mind in doing it. It is whether it is to be expected that such scenes will be witnessed in large cities and towns, or whether there are, in the very nature of a city population, insuperable obstacles to the existence of revivals of religion there. It is certain that in our own land they have occurred much more frequently in the comparatively quiet retreats of the country ; and that such scenes as are

characteristically known as revivals of religion, are scarcely known in large cities like the one where we dwell. Knowing as we do the effect which cities must have, and do have, on the religion, the chastity, the temperance, the intelligence, and the liberty of a nation ; and knowing as we do the ten thousand obstacles which exist there to the promotion of true religion, it is a question of deep interest whether Christians are to expect now, in such places, scenes like that on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. It is with main reference to this inquiry that I have commenced this course of lectures ; and my general plan will be to state the nature of a revival of religion ; to consider the relation of revivals to this country ; to show the importance of promoting religion in cities ; to show what is the general character of cities, with particular reference to this inquiry ; to consider whether revivals may be expected to occur in cities ; and to show the desirableness of such works of grace there.

The following things will express what is meant by a revival of religion ; or the following truths are essential elements in the theory of such a revival :—

1. There may be a radical and permanent change in a man's mind on the subject of religion. This change it is customary to express by the word "regeneration," or "the new birth." It supposes that, before this, man is entirely alienated from God, and that he first begins to love Him when he experiences this change. The previous state is one of sin. The subsequent is a state of holiness. The former is death ; the latter is life. The former is the agitation of a troubled sea, which cannot rest ; the latter, calmness, peace, joy. This change is the most thorough through which the human mind ever passes. It effects a complete revolution in the man, and his opposite states are characterized by words that express no other states in the human mind.

This change is instantaneous. The exact amount may not be known ; and the previous seriousness and anxiety may be of longer or shorter continuance ; but there *is* a moment when the heart is changed, and when the man that was characteristically a sinner becomes characteristically a Christian. This change is always attended with feeling. The man is awakened to a sense of his danger ; feels with more or less intensity that he is a sinner ; resolves to abandon his sins and seek for pardon ; is agitated with conflicts of greater or less intensity on giving up his sins ; finds greater or feebler obstacles in his way ; and at last resolves to cast himself on the mercy of God in the Redeemer, and to become a Christian. The result is, in all cases, permanent peace and joy. It is the peace of the soul when pardon is pronounced on the guilty, and when the hope of immortal glory first dawns on a benighted mind. It may be beautifully illustrated by the loveliness of the landscape when the sun at evening breaks out after a tempest ; or by the calmness of the ocean as it subsides after the storm. In the fact that such a change may occur all Christians agree ; in such a change is laid the whole theory of a revival of religion. Let many sinners simultaneously turn to God. Let conversions to Christ, instead of being few and far between, become numerous, rapidly occurring, and decided in their character ; and you have all that is usually meant when we speak of *revivals*, so far as *conversions* are concerned. Still these are all individual conversions, accomplished in each case by the Holy Spirit, and in exact accordance with the design of the Gospel, and evincing its glory. Each one is converted in the same way, by the same truth, by the same great agent, the Holy Spirit, as though he were alone, and not another mind had been awakened or converted. It is the conversion of a number of *individuals* from sin to holiness, and from Satan unto God. Look on the heavens in

a clear night, and you will have an illustration of what we mean. The stars that are set in that broad zone of light which stretches over the firmament, the milky way, are single stars, each subject to its own laws, moving in its own sphere, glorious, probably, in its own array of satellites ; but their rays meet and mingle—not less beautiful because the light of millions is blended together. Alone, they all show God's power and wisdom ; blended, they evince the same power and wisdom when He groups beauties and wonders into one. So in conversion from sin to God. Take the case of a single true conversion to God, and extend it to a community, to *many* individuals passing through that change, and you have all the theory of a revival of religion. It is bringing together many conversions ; arresting simultaneously many minds ; perhaps condensing into a single place, and into a few weeks, the ordinary work of many distant places and many years. The essential fact is, that a sinner may be converted by the agency of the Spirit of God from his sins. The same power which changes him, *may* change others also. Let substantially the same views, and feelings, and changes which exist in the case of the individual, exist in the case of others ; let a deep seriousness pervade a community, and a spirit of prayer be diffused there ; let the ordinary haunts of pleasure and vice be forsaken for the places of devotion ; and you have the theory, so far as I know, of a revival of religion.

2. The second fact is, that there may be times in the life of a Christian of unusual peace and joy. To whatever it may be owing, it will be assumed as a fact,—for the truth of which I now depend on an appeal to the Christian's own feelings,—that there *are* times in his life of far more than usual elevation in piety ; times when his "peace is like a river," and his love to God and man "like the waves of the sea." There are times when he feels an irresistible longing

for communion with God ; when the breath of praise is sweet ; when every thing seems to be full of God ; when all his feelings prompt him to devotion ; and when he becomes so impressed with the great truths of Christianity, and filled with the hope of heaven, that he desires to live only for God and for the skies. Earthly objects lose their lustre in his view ; their brightest, gayest colours fade away ; and an insatiable panting of soul leads him away from these to hold communion with the Redeemer. A light, pure, tranquil, constant, is shed on all the truths of religion, and the desire for the salvation of children, partners, parents, friends, of the church and of the world, enchains all the affections. Then to pray is easy, and to converse with Christians and with sinners is easy, and the prospect of boundless wealth and of the brightest honours would be gladly exchanged for the privilege of converting and saving a single soul.

When this occurs in a church, and these feelings pervade any considerable portion of the people of God, there is a revival of religion so far as the church is concerned. Let Christians as a body live manifestly under the influence of their religion ; let a feeling of devotion pervade a whole church, such as you have felt in the favoured times of your piety ; and there would be a revival of religion,—a work of grace that would soon extend to other minds, and catch, like spreading fires, on the altars of other hearts. Let a Christian community feel on the great subjects of religion what individual Christians sometimes feel, and should *always* feel, and, so far as the church is concerned, there would be all the phenomena that exist in a revival of religion. A revival in the church is a revival in individual hearts,—and nothing more. It is when each individual Christian becomes more sensible of his obligations, more prayerful, more holy, and more anxious for the salvation of men. Let every professing Christian awake to what he should be, and come

under the full influence of his religion, and in such a church there would be a revival. Such a sense of obligation, and such joy, and peace, and love, and zeal in the individual members of a church *would be a revival*. But in the most earnest desires for your own salvation, there is no violation of any of the proper laws of Christian action. In great, strenuous, and combined efforts for the salvation of others, in unceasing prayer for the redemption of all the world, there is no departure from the precepts of Christ, nor from the spirit which He manifested on earth.

3. The third feature that occurs in a revival of religion, to which it is proper to direct your attention, is, that an extensive influence goes over a community, and affects with seriousness many who are not ultimately converted to God. Many individuals are usually made serious; many gay and worldly amusements are suspended; many persons, not accustomed to go to a place of prayer, are led to the sanctuary; many, formerly indifferent to religion, or opposed to it, are now willing to converse on it; many, perhaps, are led to pray in secret and to read the Bible, who before had wholly neglected the means of grace. Many who never enter into the kingdom of God seem to be just on its borders, and hesitate long whether they shall give up the world and become Christians, or whether they shall give up their serious impressions and return to their former indifference and sins. The subsiding of a revival, or the dying zeal of Christians, or some powerful temptation, or a strong returning tide of worldliness and vanity, leaves many such persons still with the world, and their serious impressions vanish,—perhaps to return no more.

4. It remains only to be added, as an essential feature in a revival, that it is produced by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not the work of man, however human agency may be employed. Imperfections there may be, and things

to regret there may be, as in all that man touches there is ; but the phenomenon itself we regard as the work of the Holy Ghost, alike beyond human power to produce it and to control it. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth ;" and such is the work of the Spirit, alike in an individual conversion or in a revival of religion. The wind, sometimes gentle, sometimes terrific, sometimes sufficient only to bend the heads of the field of wheat, or to shake the leaf of the aspen, sometimes sweeping in the fury of the storm over hills and vales, illustrates the way in which God's Spirit influences human hearts. You have seen the pliant osier bend gently before the zephyr, and the flowers and the fields of grain gently wave in a summer's eve. So gently does the Spirit of God breathe upon a church and people. So calm, so lovely, so pure are those influences which incline the mind to prayer, to thought, to Christ, to heaven. You have seen the clouds grow dark in the western sky. They roll upward and onward, enfolding on themselves, and throwing their ample volumes over the heavens. The lightnings play, and the thunder rolls, and the tornado sweeps over hills and vales, and the proud oak crashes on the mountains. "The wind blows where it pleases ;" and thus, too, the Spirit of God passes with more than human power over a community, and many a stout-hearted sinner, like the quivering elm or oak, trembles under the influences of truth. *They* see a dark cloud gathering in the sky ; they hear the thunder of justice ; they see the heavens flash along their guilty path ; and they are prostrated before God, like the forest before the mighty tempest. The storm passes by, and the sun rides serene again in the heavens, and universal nature smiles,—beautiful emblem of the effect of a revival of religion.

Such is a brief description of what actually occurs. I shall now proceed to show that these phenomena are such as we have reason to expect from the manner in which the human mind is constituted, and society organized.

I first call your attention to the manner in which society is constituted, and to the inquiry whether such a work of grace is in any way adapted to its original laws and propensities. The idea which I wish to illustrate is, that *God has adapted society to be moved simultaneously by common interests*. He *might* have made the world differently. He might have peopled it with independent individuals, bound together by no common sympathies, cheered by no common joys, impelled to effort by no common wants. All that is tender in parental and filial affection ; all that is mild, bland, purifying in mutual love ; all that is elevating in sympathetic sorrow and joy ; all that is great and ennobling in the love of the species, might have been unknown. Isolated individuals, though surrounded by thousands, there might have been no cord to bind us to the living world, and we might have wept alone, rejoiced alone, died alone. The sun might have shed his beams on us in our solitary rambles, and not a mortal have felt an interest in our bliss or woe. Each melancholy individual might have lived unbenefitted by the existence of any other, and with no one to shed a tear on the bed of moss, when in disease he would lie down, and when he would die.

But this is not the way in which God has chosen to fit up the world. He has made the race one great brotherhood, and each one has some interest in the obscurest man that lives, in the wildest barbarian that seeks a shelter beneath a rock, or that finds a home in a cave. Pierce their veins. The same purple fluid meanders there. Analyse their feelings. Unknown to each other, they weep over the same distress ; strangers in other things, they

mingle their efforts to save the same fellow-mortal from death. This great common brotherhood God has broken up into communities of nations, tribes, clans, families ; each with its own sets of sympathies, with peculiar interests, with peculiar sorrows and joys. One design of this is to divide our sorrows ; another, to double our joys ; another, to perpetuate and to spread just sentiments, to diffuse rapidly all that will meliorate the condition of the race. Sorrow hath not half its pangs when you can mingle your tears with those of a sister or a wife ; and joy has not diffused half its blessings until *your* joy has lighted up the countenance of another, be it a son, a father, or even a stranger.

Now there was no way conceivable in which just sentiments and feelings could be so rapidly spread as by this very organization. Susceptible as it is, like every thing else, of being perverted to evil purposes, yet still it is stronger in favour of virtue than of vice, of religion than of irreligion. We appeal, then, to this organization, and maintain that the way to propagate and secure just sentiments in a community, is to appeal to common sympathies and common feelings. If you wish to spread any opinions and principles, you will do it by appealing to individuals *as such*, you will call to your aid the power of the social organization. You will rouse men by their common attachment to country ; you will remind them of dear-bought liberty ; you will lay before them their common dangers ; you will awaken a *common* feeling, and endeavour to lead them forth to the martial field together. When danger presses, you will strike a chord that shall vibrate in every heart, and you will expect sympathy, concert, united action. I have seen, during the last few years, a common sympathy extend through all the commercial world. I have seen the merchants of our cities and towns agitated by a common apprehension of danger, and their hearts vibrating with a common emotion, from Bangor to

New Orleans. I ask why there may not be as deep common feeling on the subject of religion? I have seen, during the past few months, this whole community agitated on the eve of a pending election. Two great parties, vigilant, active, energetic, fired with the hopes of victory, and each feeling that the destiny of the nation depended on the result, were arrayed against each other. Committees were appointed to make arrangements; public meetings were held, and the flagging faith and zeal of vast assemblies were roused by appeals to patriotism and the love of country or of party; names were registered, and the sentiments of every man were ascertained, and the whole community was roused in the exciting struggle. Every man felt himself at liberty, or called on in duty, to speak to his neighbour, to sound his sentiments, and to endeavour to bring him to the polls. I blame not this zeal; but I refer to it to ask why the same zeal and interest should be deemed improper on the subject of religion? Assuredly, not because it is less important, or because it is less proper, to propagate great and noble sentiments by an appeal to the common feelings of men. Let the same zeal and ardour be manifest in religion; let the churches evince the same anxiety for the honour of their Lord and Redeemer, and for His ascendancy in the hearts of men, which political organizations have done; or even let the members of the churches in this land be warmed with the same solicitude for the prevalence of religion which *they* have shown for the triumph of their party, and, as I was about to say, it would be all that we could pray for in a revival of religion. Certainly, after what our eyes have seen during the last year, no one should ever blame the ardour and zeal of the friends of Christ, or object against men's being simultaneously excited and moved on the subject of religion. Not till the zeal of Christians approaches in some measure this political zeal, and not till

the anxiety of men to save their souls becomes something like the anxiety to secure the election of a favourite candidate, should the note of opposition be heard against revivals of religion. So I see, in the history of the past, the dying spark of freedom often kindled to a flame, and liberty come out of great common public excitement. Thought rouses thought, and mind acts on mind, and truth presses on truth, till a country is roused, and its great interests are safe. In time of danger, I see men with common feelings rush to the standard of freedom. The plough is left in the furrow; and the counting-house is forsaken; and the ship is moored to the wharf; and the tools of the mechanic are dropped; and the places of amusement are closed; and home is abandoned; and the hold on gold is loosed; and men of affluence seize the sword; and the professions yield up their men of talents to take the place at the head of armies; and the earth trembles under the mighty tread of the advancing legions; for the great common interests of a nation are in danger. Then deeds of self-denial become the theme of the eloquent, and the names of these men are given in charge to history, to be transmitted to future times.

I speak not of this to blame it. I ask only, why should not religion be expected to be extended and perpetuated by some such appeals to the common feelings and sympathies of men? But if so, there would be a revival of religion.

In further illustration of this, I observe, that, however solitary and dissocial infidelity may be, this is not the nature of Christianity. Infidelity may appeal to no sympathies and no common hopes; but this is not the nature of the Christian religion. Infidelity may have no power to increase the tenderness of attachment, to purify friendship, to bind the cords of love more closely; but it is not so with Christianity. Infidelity has always loved to snap the

cords of social life rudely asunder ; but Christianity has loved to make stronger those silken ties, and to deepen all the tender sympathies of the heart. There is not one of the sympathies of our nature that Christianity does not make more tender, nor one of the social affections that it does not design to strengthen and to purify. It aims to sanctify all that is social, kind, and tender in men.

I know the objection that is brought against revivals, that they are the work of sympathy alone. But I am yet to understand why religion is to spread through the world by denying it the aid of the social sympathies, and of those tender feelings which facilitate the propagation of other just opinions and feelings. I am yet to learn, when the flame of patriotism is made to burn more pure and bright by appealing to all that is tender and sympathetic in our nature, why *religion* is to be regarded as suspicious and tarnished, because the pleadings of a father or mother, or the tears of a sister, have been the occasion, though amidst deep excitement, of directing the thoughts to eternity. To me it seems there is a peculiar loveliness in the spread of religion in this way ; and I love to contemplate Christianity calling to its aid whatever of tenderness, kindness, and love there may be existing in the bosom of fallen and erring man. These sympathies are the precious remains of the joys of paradise lost ; they may be made invaluable aids in the work of securing paradise again. They serve to distinguish man, though fallen, from the dissocial and unsympathizing apostasy of beings of pure malignancy in hell ; and their existence in man *may* have been one of the reasons why *he* was selected for redemption, while fallen angels were passed by in their sins. On no subject have we so many common interests at stake as in religion. I look upon a family circle. What tender feelings ! What mutual love ! What common joys ! What united sorrows !

The blow that strikes one member strikes all. The joy that lights up one countenance diffuses its smiles over all. Together they kneel by the side of the one that is sick; together they rejoice at his recovery; or they bow their heads and weep when he dies, and put on the same sad habiliments of grief, and walk to his grave. Nor are these all their common joys and woes. They are plunged into the same guilt and danger. They are together under the fearful visitations of that curse which has travelled down from the first apostasy of man. They are going to a common abode beneath the ground. And that guilty and suffering circle, too, *may be* irradiated with the same beams of hope, and the same balm of Gilead and the same great Physician may impart healing there. Now we ask, why may they not become Christians together? Sunk in the same woes, why may they not rise to the same immortal hope? When one member is awakened, why should not the same feeling run through the united group? When one is impressed with the great thoughts of immortality, why should not the same thoughts weigh on each spirit? And when the eyes of one kindle with the hope of eternal life, why should not every eye catch the immortal radiance, and every heart be filled with the hope of heaven? And why may we not appeal to them by all the hopes of sitting down together in a world of bliss, and by all the fears of being separated to different destinies in an eternal heaven or hell? And yet let this feeling go through this family, and produce its appropriate results, and there would be a revival of religion.

The truth is, there are no sympathies so deep on any other subject as on the subject of religion. The sympathies of the human heart are never met and satisfied, till they are met by religion. The hopes, the fears, the joys of man never find a corresponding object till he looks away from

time, and is filled with the hope of heaven. That aged man, once full of hope in the cheerful visions of early life, now sits down and weeps, that in all life's ambition, its honours, and its joys, he has never realized what he anticipated. The big tear rolls down his cheek, worn with age and care, when he remembers how the world has flattered and betrayed him; and there he sits at the close of life on the borders of a boundless ocean, waiting to be borne to some land of bliss which he has never yet found. He has had sympathies, hopes, fears, anticipations, which have never been satisfied by this world, which nothing now can satisfy, until the eye is fixed on immortality, and he can look to a heaven of boundless glory as his home. That family so tender, so amiable, so lovely, so united in sorrows and in joys, has sympathetic emotions which can never be met but by the united hope of heaven. Never will they know the richness of pure attachment to each other until they are united in the service of God, and can look forward to the same heaven as their home. Never will their sorrows produce what they should produce, or their joys be followed with the blessings which they should convey, until all their sympathies are sanctified by the Gospel of peace, and parents and children alike hope to strike together the harp of praise in heaven. So society everywhere is full of anticipations, sympathies, and hopes, that are never fully met until a tide of religious feeling flows over the community, uniting many hearts simultaneously in the hope of heaven.

I now propose to submit some additional considerations adapted to show the nature of revivals of religion, and to vindicate them from objections.

I. My first remark is, that the dealings of God in His providence are fitted to produce revivals of religion. The phenomenon which I am endeavouring to describe, you

will recollect, is the *simultaneous conversion of many souls to Christ*, and a rapid advance in promoting the purity and zeal of Christians. The question now is, whether there is any thing in the dealings of Providence which is fitted, if a proper impression were made, to produce this result.

Let me for one moment refer you to facts which are constantly passing before your eyes. Here falls, struck down by the hand of an unseen God, some endeared member of a family,—a father, a brother, a sister, or a mother. What is the effect? There is a common lamentation around the dying bed of the friend, and a united, sad, and slow procession to the tomb. There is a sundering at once of many ties; a common feeling in view of a common loss; and together they bow the head and weep. The attention of the whole group is turned away from scenes of vanity, gain, and ambition; a palsying blow is laid on half the comforts of life, and the weeping group sit down in sackcloth and ashes. The theatre, the ball-room, and the splendid party are forsaken; and gloom is spread over the counting-room, and the man leaves the scene of his domestic grief reluctantly to go there. He has no heart now for amusement or pleasure, or even for the usual much-loved scenes of his business and ambition. God has for a time sundered the tie which bound the united group to the living world, and has made an awful chasm in their circle.

Does this affect a solitary individual? No! It affects a community. Is it designed to be the whole effect of this affliction to produce grief? Too well we know the purposes of that benevolent Father who has caused these tears, to believe this. It is to arrest the attention, and direct it to better things,—to God, to Christ, to heaven. It is to lead to reflection on sin, and death, and the judgment, and eternity. It is to admonish all the weeping group to prepare to die. The scene is *fitted* to lead to a serious life, to

religion, to God. But is it fitted to make one only a Christian? Is it an appeal to solitary, independent emotions? No. It extends to the total group. And if a suitable impression were made by it on all, it would lead them together to the Saviour. Yet here would be all the elements of a revival of religion; and here is an event fitted to lead a *community* up to God.

So when pestilence spreads among a people, and thousands die; so when famine is abroad on the earth, there is an appeal made to *communities*; and the thoughts of men, if any suitable impression were made, would be directed to God, and to a better world. So—to change the theme—the earth renewed in spring-time; the fresh proofs of the goodness of God; the bounties of His hand,—new every morning, repeated every evening,—all are fitted to lead men to God, and are an appeal to them as *communities*. And there is neither a judgment of the Almighty, nor a blessing that comes from our great Father's hand, that is not fitted to impress *communities* with the importance of religion, and to lead alienated social man back to God. Thus, threatened ruin roused Nineveh to repentance; and thus God visits the earth alike with judgment and mercy, to rouse the attention of communities, and direct their thoughts to eternity and to heaven.

II. But whatever may be said of providential dealings, one thing is clear,—the *truth* of God is adapted to promote revivals of religion. That great system of glorious doctrines which constitutes “the everlasting Gospel,” is adapted to produce every where such works of grace among men. It began its career in a glorious revival of religion on the day of Pentecost. It showed its power of moving communities, and especially the communities made up of cities and large towns, in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Antioch, in Ephesus, in Corinth, in Rome. The Gospel was propa-

gated at first by a succession of most signal works of grace, carried on alike among the most degraded and the most refined portions of mankind; and it has continued, as we shall yet see, to extend its power and influence mainly in this manner.

Even now, if the truths of the Bible were applied by the Spirit of God to the hearts of the people in this house, the scenes of the day of Pentecost would be renewed here. If that same truth were applied, as it might be, to the inhabitants of our great cities, the interesting, though deeply agitating, scenes which occurred in Jerusalem and in Ephesus, would be renewed in Philadelphia, in New York, in Boston, in New Orleans. Should the great truths affecting your welfare, my hearers, now put forth their power; should every one here feel as he should feel in view of the reality of his situation, a deep solemnity would come over this house, and there would be a simultaneous rushing to the cross; a burst of feeling in every part of this house, like that which agitated the bosom of the jailor at Philippi, when he said, "What *must* I do to be saved?" Recall a few of those truths. You are sinners,—sinners deeply depraved, and under the condemning sentence of a most holy but violated law. What if every man, and woman, and child here should feel this? What deep emotion would agitate their bosoms! What anxiety would be depicted on every countenance! How would the now roving eye be fixed in solemn thought, and the now gay and thoughtless heart prompt the deep inquiry, "What is to be my doom?" Yet this is just such a scene as occurs in a revival of religion.

Again: you will die,—all, all die. You will die soon. You have but a few more plans to form and execute, or more probably to leave half-executed, or but just commenced, before you will die—inevitably die. Were this truth felt

by all, what emotion would there be in this room ! What bosom but would swell with the anxious inquiry, "What *is it* to die ? and what must I do to be prepared for death ?" Yet there would be such a scene as occurs in a revival of religion. Another truth. You will go to another world. You will stand at the bar of God. You will give a solemn account for all the deeds done in the body. You will bow with willing or constrained submission to the eternal doom pronounced on men by Jesus Christ. You will go from that tribunal to heaven or to hell. Perhaps in a week, a day, an hour, you may know fully what is meant by those mysterious and awful words, death, judgment, eternity ; what *it is* to die, and to stand before God. And can any one doubt that if all here felt the force of these truths, there would be a simultaneous impression on the subject of religion, and hundreds of voices here crying out, "What must we do to be saved ?" These truths are in their nature fitted not to impress one, but all ; not to lead one only to prepare to meet God, but to conduct all at the same time to the throne of mercy. Yet here would be a revival of religion. And why should it not be so ? What law of our nature, or of Christianity, is violated when such scenes occur ? We have sinned together ; and why should we not arise together and seek forgiveness ? We are travelling together to the grave, and to the judgment bar ; why should we not resolve to go together to heaven ? The same Redeemer has died for us all ; and why should we not together seek for pardon through His blood ? We shall lie in a common grave, mingle with the same dust of the valley, hear the sound of the same trumpet of the archangel in the day of judgment ; and why should we not feel a common interest in such scenes now, and gather around the same cross, and lay hold together on eternal life ? If it be reasonable for an individual to do it, why not for many—for all ? Why

should not the common feeling go from heart to heart, and *all* resolve by the grace of God to secure the salvation of the soul? What law of our nature would be violated, should this be done? Yet here would be all the phenomena of a revival of religion.

III. In the third place, there are evils of sin in all communities which can be overcome only by such influences as attend a revival of religion. I refer to evils of alliance; of compact; of confederation; the sins of association and of common pursuit, where one man keeps another in countenance, or one man leads on the many to transgression. Sin is never, perhaps, solitary. One sin is interlocked with others, and is sustained by others. This is especially the case when the world becomes gay and giddy; when the ordinary means of grace fail to make an impression; when luxury spreads its temptations over a community; when the public mind becomes intent on gain; when political strife rages throughout a community; or when some bold and daring allurements of vice engrosses the public mind, and the laws of God and man are alike set at defiance. Such scenes occur peculiarly in cities and large towns. Rarely is it here that one form of iniquity stands by itself: it is interlocked with others. Such combinations of evil can be met only by the power that goes forth in a revival of religion. To meet it and overcome it is beyond the power of man, and beyond the ordinary influences even of the Spirit of God. The only resource of the church, then, is in the right arm of the Most High, and in the power which God displays when hundreds are made to bow simultaneously to the Son of God.

IV. I make my appeal, in the fourth place, to that argument with which, perhaps, I should have commenced,—the testimony of the Bible. The question is, whether the Scriptures speak of such scenes as are known

in modern revivals of religion as to be expected under the influence of the Gospel of Christ. I cannot go at length into this part of the argument; but I will group together, first, a collection of passages of Scripture chiefly from one prophet, to show how *he* felt on the subject, and what were the views which he entertained of the effects of the true religion when the Messiah should have come. I refer to Isaiah. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together." So the *effect* of such a work of grace is described in a song of praise in the mouth of the Church. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." (Isai. lxi. 10, 11.) Who hath not seen the beautiful effect on the dry and parched earth of refreshing summer showers? Such effects, the prophet said, would be witnessed under the Gospel; such effects have been witnessed in hundreds of the towns and villages of our own land. Listen to another description of such a work of grace; a description which seems to be a beautiful prophetic record of what has occurred often even in our own times. It is the language of God Himself. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by

the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." (Isai. xlv. 3-5.) "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth." (Isai. lv. 10, 11.) Such descriptions were the prophetic visions of future time; descriptions of what has since occurred, as unerring as were those which foretold the doom of Babylon, of Tyre, of Idumea, from the lips of the same prophet. And as the words of that singularly endowed and favoured prophet are now the *best possible* to describe the condition of Babylon and Idumea, so they are still the best which can be selected to describe a revival of religion.

Remember, also, that on scenes like this the heart of the Saviour was intently fixed. To prepare the way for this, to furnish truth that might be presented in times like this, He preached and toiled; to make it possible that scenes like this should be witnessed among men, He died; to secure the presence of the Holy Ghost in this manner, He ascended to heaven. "It is expedient for you," said He, "that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove," *i. e.*, convince, "the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." (John xvi. 7, 8.) The Saviour did depart. He ascended to His native skies. His disciples waited for the promised blessing, at once the source of comfort to their disconsolate hearts, and the pledge that their Lord and Master had reached the courts of heaven. Fifty days after His resurrection, ten days only after His ascension, lo! the promised Spirit descended, and the conversion of three thousand in a single day, on the very spot where the hands

of men had been just imbrued in the blood of the Lamb of God, and a part of whom had been concerned, doubtless, in enacting that horrid tragedy, showed that the human heart was under His control, and that the most wicked men, in one of the most guilty cities on the earth, might be simultaneously swayed and changed in a revival of religion.

Were there time, we might follow the apostles as they went forth from that place fresh from the presence of God, after having thus had a living demonstration of what the truth was fitted to effect on masses of mind. Let any one look at the record made respecting Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi; and he will see that the Gospel was propagated there amidst scenes that resemble, in all their essential features, modern revivals of religion. Indeed, there was no other way in which it could be done. The apostles never contemplated the conversion of solitary, isolated individuals. They expected to move *masses of mind, interlocked and confederated communities of sin;* AND IT WAS DONE.

SERMON V.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REVIVALS IN CITIES.

“AND that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.”—Luke xxiv. 47.

THE point which will be before us at this time will be THE IMPORTANCE OF REVIVALS OF RELIGION IN CITIES AND LARGE TOWNS. On a subject so copious I scarcely know where to begin, or what topics of illustration to select out of the numbers which at once present themselves to the mind. But passing by a great variety of considerations which cannot be urged in the short time allotted to a single public service, or reserving them to illustrate other parts of our main subject, I shall select a few designed to ascertain the Redeemer's view of the importance of cities ; the view of the apostles on the same subject ; and the bearing which the state of religion in cities must have on the world at large.

I. I begin with the view which the Saviour had of the importance of special efforts for the conversion of cities.

Our text contains an expression of His views about the importance of revivals in cities. When it was uttered, He was about to finish His work on earth ; He had made an atonement for sin ; He had risen from the dead ; He was soon to ascend to heaven ; and He was about giving to His disciples His parting charge, and directing them in regard to their plans and labours for the conversion of the world. It is natural to suppose that He would suggest to them the most feasible and economical mode of expending their strength and forming their plans ; and that He would direct them how to act in the most efficient

manner on the strong points of influence in the world. Our text contains the sum of His instructions. Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached among all nations, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM. That was the capital of the nation; that the place where He had been put to death; that a city pre-eminent in wickedness and in influence; and that, therefore, was the place to which their attention was to be first directed. It is worthy of remark also, as an illustration of our subject, that He designed that they should labour there with special reference to a revival of religion in that city. There they were to tarry "until they were endued with power from on high," (Luke xxiv. 49,) and there to "wait for the promise of the Father." (Acts i. 4.) In that great and guilty metropolis they were to remain until the great movement for the conversion of the world to God was to be commenced in a glorious revival of religion.

The Redeemer's views of the importance of religion in cities were further illustrated by His own personal labours when on earth. He had designed a personal ministry that was to continue but three or four years; and it was manifestly a question with Him where that period could be most advantageously spent for the great objects which He had in view. Thirty years He had spent, before He entered on His public work, in the quiet retreats of an obscure and humble country village; far from the noise and bustle of a large town; far from the excitements of the capital; far from the distractions and anxieties of a populous city. He had loved—we may suppose, without much danger of indulging in mere fancy—the hills and vales, the fields and groves, the shady retreats, the stillness and quiet of the region around Nazareth,—a love in which all who desire to cultivate meek, and humble, and pure religion *like* His will participate; for such scenes are most favourable to com-

munion with God. Is it improper to suppose that the feelings which made the Redeemer delight in a place like Nazareth were such as prompted the following lines from the sweet Christian poet Cowper?—

“Far from the world, O Lord, I flee;
From strife and tumult far;
From scenes where Satan wages still
His most successful war.

The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree;
And seem by Thy sweet bounty made
For those who follow Thee.”

But when He entered on His public work, He *emerged* from this obscure and humble life. He made His permanent home in Capernaum, a central city in Galilee, at the head of the Sea of Tiberias. He preached in all the cities which skirted the Lake of Gennesareth; in the large towns which were between them and the capital; and He preached much amidst assembled thousands on the great festivals in Jerusalem itself. His mighty works were in the vicinity of these large towns, where thousands could be easily assembled to hear Him. He was found in the busy haunts of men; His walks were along the shores of that lake where stood Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida; and His aim was to carry at once the influence of His Gospel to the centres of influence and power. The sum of His views on this subject is expressed in the following passages of the New Testament: “And it came to pass,” says Matthew, “when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.” (Matt. xi. 1.) “I must preach the kingdom of God,” said He, “to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.” (Luke iv. 43.) “How often,” said He of Jerusalem, “*how often* would I have gathered *THY CHILDREN* together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye

would not !” (Matt. xxiii. 37 ; Luke xiii. 34.) So it is said respecting most of the works of His public ministry. “Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not.” (Matt. xi. 20.) It is a circumstance also which may throw some light on the Divine estimate of the importance of cities, that it was predicted that the announcements of the Gospel would be first made to them. “O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain ; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid ; say UNTO THE CITIES OF JUDAH, Behold your God !” (Isaiah xi. 9.)

The same thing in regard to the views of the Redeemer is everywhere evinced in His instructions to His disciples. It is manifest that He anticipated that the principal sphere of *their* labours would be in cities and large towns. “Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy.” (Matt. x. 11.) “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come.” (Luke x. 1.) “When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another ; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.” (Matt. x. 23.) From these and numerous similar passages of Scripture it is evident that the Saviour felt that it was of special importance that great efforts should be made for the conversion of cities ; and that He not only spent a large portion of His own public ministry there, but anticipated that His apostles would also. We shall not err, therefore, in the conclusion, that He felt that it was of special importance that cities and large towns should be pervaded with His Gospel, and that *in* those places were to be witnessed signal displays of His saving power.

II. The same conclusion will be reached, if we examine the views which the apostles had of the importance of these fields of labour. I need not say that a large part of the labours of the apostles, so far as the Scripture record informs us, was devoted to cities and large towns, and that the most signal success of the Gospel was there. All that is needful for the illustration of this part of our subject, is the most summary reference to the labours of the apostles, and to the character of the large cities where they laboured. I by no means mean to say, that the apostles did not feel it important to preach the Gospel in country villages and neighbourhoods. Their commission extended to all the world, and we know that Paul preached the Gospel in all the places where he travelled. But the idea is, that they felt that cities were central places of power and influence; that they were the strong holds of the enemy of man; that wickedness was concentrated there; and that their object was to go from city to city until they reached the capital of the world, the very seat of imperial power, and they formed their plan with a design that the banners of the faith should, if possible, before they died, be seen streaming from the palaces of the Cæsars. They acted on the principle on which Alexander, and Cæsar, and all the great conquerors of all times act, that of seizing upon the strong places of power, and holding them in subjection, with the assurance that all other places will then become an easy conquest.

A slight glance at the labours of the apostles, and at the principal places where the Gospel triumphed at first, will show the estimate which they affixed to cities and large towns, and their views of the proper places where special efforts for the spread of the Gospel should be made. The Gospel was first preached, after the ascension of the Redeemer, in Jerusalem, a city ten miles in circumference, and esteemed the third city of the age, the largest city of

the land in which He lived, and the capital of the nation. The apostles went to Antioch, on the Orontes, the capital of Syria, and made that a centre of Christian influence. They preached in Ephesus, regarded as the ornament and, in fact, the most proud and splendid city in Asia Minor, and established a church there. There stood one of the seven wonders of the world, and there idolatry was intrenched with a power and sustained with a magnificence not surpassed in any part of the earth. They preached in Derbe, in Lystra, and in Iconium,—cities in the same region. They founded churches in Smyrna, the commercial capital of Asia Minor; in Pergamos, the literary capital of Asia Minor; in Thyatira; in Sardis, the once splendid capital of Cræsus; in Philadelphia; and in Laodicea. They preached in Philippi and Thessalonica, and founded churches there. They preached in Athens, the distinguished seat of philosophy, science, and art, and where the Gospel would be opposed by the most subtle and refined philosophy of the world; in Corinth, the splendid capital of Achaia, and the very centre of refinement, of luxury, and of licentiousness,—the Paris of antiquity; and they carried the Gospel to the very capital of the world, and established a church in Rome itself. Now, in the records which we have in the Acts of the Apostles, it is remarkable that a large part of the narrative is occupied in detailing the labours of the apostles in these and in other cities; and it is *as* remarkable that notwithstanding all the difficulties in the case, and all the obstacles to the Gospel in cities and large towns, its most signal triumphs were there.

From this allusion to the labours of the apostles the following things are demonstrated: 1. That they deemed cities and large towns to be worthy of their special attention and their special efforts. 2. That they had the utmost confidence in the truth of the religion which they preached.

They had no concealment ; they had no fear of submitting the evidences of their religion to the most learned, acute, and philosophic portions of mankind. They *sought* to submit the proofs of Christianity to the philosophers in Athens, in Corinth, and in Rome ; they desired to exhibit them to the priests of pagan idolatry, to the literati of the world, and to princes, nobles, and monarchs ; they performed their miracles in the most open manner, and adduced the evidence of the resurrection of their Master on Mars' Hill and in the Roman Forum, as well as in Jerusalem ; and they confidently expected that if they could *get a hearing*, they could convince the most learned and philosophic portions of mankind of the truth of the Christian religion. Such was not a work of impostors ; it was a course pursued only by men who were honest, and who had the most unwavering conviction of the truth of the system which they preached. 3. Their course demonstrates that the Gospel has *power* to meet all forms of sin and corruption, and that there is nothing in cities and large towns that constitutes an insuperable obstacle to a revival of religion. That Gospel which had power to overcome the pride and deep corruption of the Jewish capital, where the Redeemer had just been put to death, which could triumph in gay and voluptuous Corinth, in the splendid capital of Asia Minor, and in Rome itself, has power to meet any form of gaiety, licentiousness, corruption, fashion, idolatry, and combined sin of any city in nominally Christian lands, and in the heathen world. They who doubt that mighty revivals of religion may exist in large cities and towns, doubt in the face of all history, and belie all the records of the early propagation of their religion.

III. Having thus endeavoured to ascertain the sense of the Redeemer and of the apostles in regard to the importance of special efforts for the conversion of cities and large

towns, I proceed, in the third place, to remark, that that importance is seen from the fact, that vast wealth is concentrated in those places, and that the purposes of Christianity require that that wealth should be consecrated to the Redeemer. When I speak of this, I do not mean, of course, that the principal wealth of any community is in such places. That *must* lie scattered over vast surfaces, and be in many hands, in order to *maintain* cities and large towns. But I speak of that wealth which is concentrated in the hands of the comparatively few ; of the wealth which is available for the purposes of Christian benevolence ; of the wealth which has the principal power of corrupting or saving, of destroying or blessing the world. This world is to be converted to God, and it is in vain to attempt this without large and liberal benefactions. To a great extent, the *large* sums needed for that object must and will be derived from the dwellers in cities. It is there that we expect that money will be freely given ; whether it be for Christian charity ; for schools, and colleges, and seminaries of learning ; or whether it be for political purposes, for the patronage of fashion and vice, for the maintenance of the theatre, or for the support of profligacy and atheism. The effect of true religion is to lead men to consecrate their property honestly and wholly to God ; nor can there be any true religion where this is not done. Now, one has only to cast an eye over the large cities and towns of this land, to see how important it is that the mighty power of the Gospel should be felt there in constraining the rich to devote their property to God. Let him a moment reflect on the *abuses* of that property ; on the immense sums which are expended in luxury of living ; in splendour of dwellings, equipage, and apparel ; in intoxicating drinks ; in the patronage of the theatre and various corrupting forms of amusement ; and it will be no difficult matter to see how important it is that the influence of

religion should be felt in the cities of our land. It may seem startling, but it is probably true, to say, that all expenses of the various benevolent Societies in this land for the propagation of the Gospel in the heathen world, would be more than met by the annual expenses in one of our large cities for the single article of intoxicating drinks. In the city of New York, during the last year but two, it is ascertained that the amount paid to support its four theatres was more than was contributed by all the benevolent Societies in this country for the spread of the Gospel. That wealth now *all* goes to corrupt and destroy the morals, the peace, and the souls of men. It is in cities eminently that its debasing power is felt. It is there that it alienates the soul from God, and opens fountains of corruption before the unwary and the young. It is there on every hand that we see its abuse to purposes of infamy; there that it eminently resists the Gospel; and there that it sustains the empire of Satan on earth. It is there that foreigners,—dancers and actors,—who come to debase and corrupt the young with the lax notions of morals which prevail in the licentious capitals of Europe, are chiefly found. And while I speak of this, it is not less important to make another remark on the necessity of revivals of religion in cities. A large portion of that wealth is held by the members of the Christian church; and it is a fact, that the constantly recurring objects of Christian benevolence are sustained by a very few men out of the many hundreds who are members of the churches. To re-convert those who are in the church; to teach them the true value of property, and the true intent of the Giver in bestowing it on them; to show them “a more excellent way” than to hoard it or to expend it for luxury and magnificence; and to impress on their hearts, as a great vital principle, that all they have belongs to God, and to Him alone, is now one of the most desirable

objects of Christian benevolence, and one of the chief things to be accomplished by the agency of the Holy Spirit in our land. O, if all the wealth in these cities were truly consecrated to God, what desolate fields of heathenism are there in the wide world which would not soon smile under the blessings of the Gospel? what desert and solitary place is there that would not bud and blossom as the rose?

IV. The *talent* concentrated in cities and large towns is a fourth reason why special efforts should be made for their conversion. Before I am through with what I wish to say on this head, I shall not be suspected of a design to *flatter* the inhabitants of such places as being in general superior to all the rest of mankind in intellectual strength or in solid attainments. I have passed three-fourths of my life and one-third of my ministry in the country; and I have endeavoured to observe the comparative amount of intellect and good sense in the two situations. When I speak, therefore, of the talent in cities as a reason for special effort for their conversion, or to show their importance, I by no means wish to be understood as affirming, that the inhabitants of cities are pre-eminently distinguished for what Mr. Locke calls "large, sound, round-about sense." I do not mean that there is, in general, more power to appreciate a solid argument or close reasoning; or that there is a better acquaintance with the Bible; or a higher appreciation of the maxims of sound morals; or more patient reflection on the duties of life; or more attentive contemplation of the relations which men sustain to their Maker; or a higher power of detecting sophistry, or of pronouncing on that which is characterized in public discourses by mere sound, or by false and shallow attempts at reasoning. And to apply my remarks to the immediate subject before us, I by no means mean to say that the mass of people in this land in the country are not as fully able to appreciate good preach-

ing as their more favoured and perhaps envied city brethren. Nor do I mean to say that the hurry and bustle of a city life is as well adapted to train men for patient thought; or that the kind of education which the mass of those in the so-called more elevated ranks in cities receive, peculiarly qualifies them for the office of judging of the truths of religion, in comparison with those who have been trained in what are esteemed the humbler walks of a country life. The truth is, neither situation in itself makes men qualified for patient and sound reflection, neither situation makes them of course fools. Alike in city and in country in this land, there are multitudes—it is the condition of the *mass* of the people—who are endowed with good sense, with sober views, with patient thought, and with appropriate education, to fit them to understand the truths of religion, to weigh well its evidences, and to appreciate a sensible argument, when a sensible argument is urged; nor do I know that one *situation* can claim priority over the other.

It is true, moreover, that the talent in a city is often greatly over-rated; and I do not mean to say, that the Saviour or the apostles ever sought a city because they supposed the *mass* of intellect there was more elevated or cultivated than elsewhere. It is true that ministers often over-rate the amount of talent in a city, and that they sometimes evince an anxiety to be city pastors, which is anything but a commendation of their own discernment, or their qualifications for the office, or of their power of judging of the place where true happiness is to be found; for, I take it, the brightest picture of happiness in this world is in the image of a much loved and venerated pastor in the quiet retreats of a country parish. It is true, also, that there is sometimes a *fear* of a city congregation and of a city dwelling, which operates much to prevent a faithful application of the truth; as if splendid apparel was neces-

sarily connected with profound intellect; or sofas, and ottomans, and marble mantels, and well laden centre-tables necessarily implied cultivated minds; or gay and gorgeous equipage conferred the power of criticizing profoundly and judging correctly of moral subjects. The truth is, that patient thinking, long-cherished recollections of an apt illustration or a solid argument, and just appreciation of a sound discourse, are often found most perfectly in the farmer who is all the week at his plough, and not in the whirl of fashion and business of a city life; a life where with the scenes of business of Monday morning are obliterated all the arguments, and illustrations, and impressions of the previous day.

But while this is true, it is true, also, that in this land and in all others the talent that most decidedly directs public opinion, and that acts with most power on the public mind, is found concentrated usually in cities and large towns. The most decided and influential talent in Judea was undoubtedly found in Jerusalem; the most profound intellect in Greece was in Athens and in Corinth; the most mighty minds in the Roman empire were concentrated in Rome itself, and in the surrounding towns and villas. It was from these centres that the power of talent, more than now, at the bar, in the forum, in the senate-chamber; the power of talent in philosophy, in the drama, in eloquence, and in song, was diffused throughout the world. Such, though to a less extent comparatively, is the case now. The principal talent in the medical and legal professions will seek cities and large towns as the places where it may be exercised to advantage, whether the purpose be gold or fame. Science and literature, for obvious reasons, will be found there; and the talent which seeks to influence great masses of mind, to direct public opinion, or to rise to sudden affluence and fame, will flow to such centres. All

this is obvious and indisputable ; and it is *as* obvious and indisputable, that it is desirable that special efforts should be made that that talent should be converted to God. It is not that the soul of a profound philosopher, or of a man of eminent legal attainments, or of a man distinguished in the medical profession, or of a man distinguished for science or eloquence, is of more value, or cost the Saviour more pangs to redeem it, than their humblest client or patient, or the most unlettered man in the cottage of poverty ; but it is that that talent is endowed with higher power for good or evil, and that its influence must be wider spread in promoting or retarding true religion.

V. I add, as a fifth consideration, the fact that cities and towns are places where strangers resort in great multitudes, and that revivals of religion are specially needed there for *their* conversion and for a healthful moral influence on their minds. It will be recollected that in our text the Saviour directs His apostles to *begin* the work of preaching the Gospel "at Jerusalem." Turn now to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and you will see, at least, one reason why this direction was given. The feast of Pentecost was near, and on that occasion it was arranged by the Redeemer, that the Holy Ghost should descend in the first great and glorious revival of religion. Yet on that occasion we are told, "There were dwelling (or sojourning for a time) at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." (Acts ii. 5.) "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," we are told, were there ; "and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." (Acts ii. 9-11.) It was not without design that the Gospel was to be first proclaimed with power, and that the Holy Ghost was to descend,

when these strangers were there. What would be the obvious effect of their conversion? The Gospel would soon be borne by them to the farthest part of the then known world. Those strangers were soon to disperse and return to their homes, just as the flitting multitudes do that sojourn in this city for a little while for business or for pleasure. But the Saviour saw that if those multitudes were brought under the influence of a revival of religion; if, while they were in Jerusalem, they were led to embrace the true Messiah; if, while there, their minds were directed to the eternal welfare of the soul, and they should return to their homes imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, the effect would be immediate almost on the remotest portions of the world. How different would be the influence on the destiny of mankind from what it would have been had those "strangers" been invited by the professing Christians to splendid entertainments and parties of pleasure; or had they been introduced, as distinguished strangers often are in our cities now,—and I fear sometimes by professing Christians too,—to theatres, or invited and tempted, as they are now, to drink deep of the intoxicating bowl!

What would be the effect on the strangers that crowd *this* city of a continual revival of religion here? What would be the effect on their minds and hearts if they should be constrained to feel, when they enter our houses of worship, that the Spirit of God was there as He was in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost? What would be the effect if in their transactions of business here they should find all our merchants,—or even all our professedly *Christian* merchants,—governed only by the pure and holy principles of the Gospel? What would be the effect, if, when they are invited to our dwellings, they should see the decanter banished from every sideboard and every table, and the style of living regulated by a conscientious regard to the will

of Christ ; and the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel controlling us in our dwellings? What would be the effect if one mighty and far-pervading revival of religion here, like that on the day of Pentecost, should make the visitors to the theatres so few that they would be closed, and should make it disreputable for a stranger or a citizen to patronize a place of corruption and infamy? How soon would the effect be visible in the extremity of the land and the world! To see this, let these facts be borne in mind: 1. Great numbers of strangers are in all our large cities, at all times, from every part of our land and the world. I preach the Gospel every year to many hundreds of such persons ; and probably I am not exceeding the truth when I say, that the aggregate of such persons is considerably more than the number of my regular hearers. To a great extent this is true of all other pastors in this city and in other cities. I trust and believe that the effect of their worshipping with us has not had an unhappy influence on their minds, (if I may use the language of Paul as descriptive of what I mean,) while they have been "beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ;" (Col. ii. 5 ;) and I have been permitted to know of some most happy and, I trust, saving influences on the minds of strangers resulting from their worshipping with us. But it is not unkindness to ask, what *would* have been the effect on the multitudes which have been with us, had they witnessed here scenes like those on the day of Pentecost? 2. Again: those strangers are usually men of influence, wealth, and power at home. They are the centres of opinion to large circles there. They control the habits, or the fashions, or the religious opinions of those by whom they are surrounded. A large portion of those to whom I preach in this manner are the respectable and influential merchants of the west; men who are doing as much as any

others to form the habits of the mighty empire that is rising up beyond the mountains; men who are moulding that vast population that is soon to give to this nation its president, its great officers of government, and its laws; and men who in that vast region are either to stay the tide of infidelity and sin, or to urge it onward; for if we are ever to be a nation of slaves, the chain that is to bind us is to be forged beyond the mountains. They are the men who are to be the patrons of order and education, of common schools, of colleges, and of the institutions of religion. Many of them are men who are pillars in those churches, and whose piety is to receive an impression that shall be lasting, even during a temporary sojourning with us. It is needless to ask what would be the influence on such men if they found this city and all these churches blessed with revivals of religion like rains and dews of heaven. 3. Again: if I address one such stranger now, he will pardon me if I make a remark particularly applicable to himself: if I do not address such an one, the remark is, that even Christians are not *always* as consistent and circumspect when they are abroad as when they are at home. They are, or suppose they are, unobserved. They are away from the vigilant eye of a wife, a neighbour, a child. They feel that there is less depending on their example than when they are under the well-known eye of a vigilant public opinion. Members of the churches sometimes travel on the Sabbath when away from home, and when they suppose it possible they will not be known as professing Christians. They sometimes attend church but a part of the day when in cities, and the remainder of the day is devoted to *sight-seeing*. It is an obvious plea with them, that they are engaged in business during the week, and that it cannot be *very* improper for them to visit public places *once* on the Sabbath when they are unknown. And

it is not improbable that of a Sabbath afternoon, in the spring or summer, enough of such professors might usually be found at the places of public resort to constitute a church respectable enough in numbers to celebrate the Lord's supper. They sometimes also visit places of somewhat doubtful morality, and where, if at home, they never would be found. It is not *impossible* that Christian ministers and other members of the churches sometimes visit the opera in Paris or in Italy, who would have many misgivings about *recommending* such a course to the more spiritual part of their flock or their brother Christians at home, and who themselves, when there, are most conscientious in abstaining from such amusements. And I may ask, are professors of religion and officers of the churches from other parts of our land never found in the theatres of our cities? It is very doubtful whether a single theatre could be sustained for a month in this city if it were not for the patronage of strangers. But if this be the fact, then the importance of revivals here, of a healthful, constant, unceasing heavenly influence in all our churches, is apparent. To influence the stranger Christian; to incline his heart more and more to the ways of God; to keep him from temptation when here; and to send him back to his home, blessed not only by our hospitality, but with more of the Spirit of his Master, we should pray unceasingly for the descending influences of the grace of God on all our churches and on all the population of this city. To save the stranger that comes among us from the dram shop, the theatre, the house of infamy, we should beseech the God of heaven that he may be greeted when he comes here with the influence of religion; that every Christian whom he may meet may show that his heart is deeply engaged in the work of the Lord, and feels a deep interest in the salvation of souls; and that throughout all our cities and towns there may be felt the power of the *presence of the GOD OF REVIVALS.*

SERMON VI.

THE DESIRABLENESS OF REVIVALS IN CITIES.

“O LORD, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known ; in wrath remember mercy.”—Hab. iii. 2.

THE sentiment of this text, in the connexion in which it stands, is, that a revival of pure religion was desirable ; and particularly in view of the awful judgments of God, and the manifestations of His majesty and justice, which the prophet saw in vision. God is seen by the prophet approaching amidst many terrors to take vengeance on the wicked. His glory covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise. His brightness is as the light, and there are bright beams (margin) like playing lightnings at His side. Before Him goes the pestilence, and burning coals at His feet. The nations are driven asunder ; and the everlasting mountains are scattered ; the perpetual hills bow ; and the deep lifts up its voice. The sun and the moon stand still in their habitation ; and the universe is in consternation at the awful presence of JEHOVAH. In view of these sublime and awful manifestations, the prophet pleads with God to revive His work, and to remember mercy in the midst of wrath. It was only by a revival of religion that His wrath could be averted ; or that His people could be prepared for these sublime exhibitions of their God.

I shall take occasion from these words to address you on the desirableness of revivals of religion, particularly in cities ; and shall endeavour to adhere so far, at least, to the senti-

ment of the text, as to keep before the eye the desirableness of such works of grace from the awful displays of Divine justice which the inhabitants of guilty cities have reason to apprehend. My last sermon on this general subject was on the *importance* of cities and large towns, particularly with reference to religion. My design in this discourse is to state some reasons why such works of grace as I have endeavoured to describe as included under the word **REVIVALS**, are desirable in such places.

Who doubts this? it may at once be asked; and what is the necessity of discoursing on so plain a topic to a Christian people? Are there any Christians who doubt that a revival of pure religion in a city is desirable? And can there be a necessity to occupy the time of an entire service on a point where there can be but one opinion? These questions, I doubt not, would be asked by many, in a candid and not a captious spirit; and they demand an answer in the same spirit. In a word, then, I would reply, (1.) That men often admit that to be true in relation to which they have little feeling or emotion; and my wish in regard to a large portion of my hearers is not so much to convince their understandings on so plain a point, as to enkindle in the heart an earnest *desire* for such works of mercy. It may be that the main point of my discourse would be at once admitted to be true without argument; but it may be, also, that its force may be more deeply felt by the contemplation of the views which I shall exhibit. (2.) To the candid questions which I have supposed to be submitted to me at the outset of my argument, I wish also to propose one or two in reply, in a spirit and manner as candid and as free from captiousness. Is it true, then, that *all* professed Christians really desire a revival of religion of the kind which I have described? Are there none who start back at the word **REVIVAL**, and who feel an instinctive

dislike to the name? Are there none in whose minds the word suggests the idea of mere excitement; of scenes of enthusiasm and disorder; of irregularity and wildfire? Are there none who, when they pray, and with very honest intentions in the main, for a revival, do it with many qualifications and mental reservations, and with an apprehension or fear that the prayer *may* be answered;—who pray from the custom of using such language, rather than from any intelligent and sincere wish that such scenes as that on the day of Pentecost may be witnessed? And I cannot but ask one more question. When prayers are offered *for* revivals, are there no prayers *against* them? While the fervent petitions of a portion of an assembled church ascend to heaven for the descent of the Holy Spirit like floods and showers, are there no prayers ascending to heaven, or no secret desires, that such influences may be restrained? no *counter* petitions that cross and recross the prayers of those who love revivals, as they ascend up to God? It is not given to men to know the hearts, nor the real feelings and desires, of the professed people of God; but if it could be ascertained, it would not be uninteresting to know what portion of professed Christians, in deep and fervent sincerity, daily pray, “O Lord, revive Thy work!”

I do not consider it, therefore, superfluous to state some reasons why revivals of religion are desirable.

But what would be the scene, should there be a revival of religion in a city like this? I have on a former occasion explained at length my views of the nature of a revival. To the success of my argument at this time, it is quite material that we have some distinct idea of what would actually occur in such a case.

IT WOULD NOT BE MERE EXCITEMENT. I have no fondness for mere excitement. I do not advocate it. Indeed, a very large part of my ministerial labours is directed *against*

excitement, and intended to allay and restrain its feverishness. I refer to the agitations produced by the love of gain, and those which are exhibited in the political world, and in the excited and excitable world of gaiety and fashion. I have never uttered a word in favour of disorder, lawlessness, irregularity, eccentricity, or of any religious movement which would be a violation of decency and order. I am no advocate for suspending the proper business of life, or for breaking in upon regular employment in honest and honourable industry. I have no views of religion, or of revivals, which would not make men more sober, and honest, and industrious, and chastened in their lives. I have not one word to say in disregard of the urbanities and civilities of social life; of the respect due to rank and office; not one word to say in favour of what has sometimes been charged on the promoters of revivals,—falsely in general,—a contempt for the courtesies of life, and an outrage on the feelings of others. I hold no views of religion which would not make men more courteous, refined, and truly polite and respectful, *in* revivals and at all times. I advocate no excitement but that which truth produces, and not half as much as prevails in the gay world; I advocate the necessity for no new doctrines to carry on such a work, no doctrines but such as were preached by the Redeemer and His apostles; I advocate no means and measures but such as are best adapted to secure to the Gospel—the pure Gospel—access to the human heart, and such as are in accordance with all the settled institutions of Christianity; and I advocate no style of preaching that is vulgar in diction or action; that is offensive to good taste in tone and manner; that is not the result of careful preparation; and that is not characterized by the condensation of as much truth as can be made to reach the hearts of men; no preaching where the preacher

is not much impressed, as conscious of his awful charge, and anxious mainly that the flock he feeds should feel it too.

What effects, then, should we anticipate from a general revival of religion in a city? There are in this city, for illustration, and its surrounding districts and liberties, somewhere about twenty-six thousand families. What is the character of a large portion of them, I need not now pause to say. Now the effect of a revival of religion that should pervade the whole population, would be seen at once in those families, and in all the influences that go from the family hearth and altar, and would be diffused from those centres over all the walks of life. Every family, if religion were to diffuse its influence there, would be a family of prayer. The morning and the evening sacrifice would ascend to God. Grateful praise would be poured on the ear of JEHOVAH in all these dwellings, as the beams of the new morning sun diffused their radiance over the world; and in the stillness of the evening, the works and duties of the day again performed, the interesting group would come around the altar again to render praise, and to commend themselves to the protecting care of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps. Each day they would go forth to its duties and trials, consecrated by the morning offering of praise and prayer, under the protection of the unslumbering eye of God: in each scene of sorrow, or night of calamity, they would bow submissively to His will. Children would be taught; taught in proper human learning; taught the Bible; taught the ways of virtue, religion, temperance, purity, and industry; taught to fear the name of God, to hate a lie, to prepare for an honourable career in the various walks of life. The Sabbath would return to bless each household with its influences of mercy; and the sanctuary would deepen the lessons of family instruction; and the universal rest from toil would be a sweet type of the

heavenly world. Temperance would be promoted; and the fountains of poison that now flow everywhere to corrupt and destroy, would be closed for ever. The houses of pollution and infamy would no more open to allure and decoy the young to death; and their inmates, made living and pure members of the body of Christ, would be preparing to walk before Him in white robes in heaven. The theatre would no more open its doors to invite the young, the stranger, and the defenceless to forget a father's prayers and a mother's counsels, and to become the companion of the unprincipled and the vile. Sober industry would take the place of idleness; chastity, the place of impurity; hope would irradiate the countenance where now sits vacancy or despair; intelligence would take the place of ignorance; plenty and comfort would succeed to want; decency of apparel, to penury and rags; beauty and health would re-visit the countenance now bloated and haggard; and peace, the heart that now hath woe and sorrow from intemperance; thought—sober, rich, pure, heavenly thought—would succeed to gaiety; honesty, to fraud; integrity, to baseness; universal charity, to suspicion, innuendo, and slander; and a disposition to do good to all, and to spread the Gospel around the world with all its healing influences, would succeed the disposition to spend the wealth which God gives in the scenes of dissipation, revelry, and sin. Talent that now is wasted and blasted by sensuality, or perverted by ambition; genius whose fires are now kindled and which now burn for nought, would be converted to noble purposes. That vigour of frame which is now wasted in scenes of dissipation, would prepare itself to brave the snows of the north, or the sands of the equator, in making known a Saviour's love; and from lips where now heavy curses roll, the Gospel would soon whisper peace.

Meantime, a revival of religion would destroy or injure

nothing that is truly valuable. It would not interfere with one rational enjoyment. It would not close one school. It would not diminish the interest in an orphan asylum, an hospital, a college, a charitable endowment, but would augment the interest in all. It would moor no ship to the wharf; arrest no car, and no steam-boat,—*except on the Sabbath*; and stay none of the wheels of commerce or of honourable and honest enterprise.

In one word, “a reformation extending to every house in the city would be the noblest sight the lover of humanity ever saw. The reign of vice which now regards no limit, but throws its malign influence within every enclosure, would on all sides be curtailed. The horrid clang of profaneness, the bloated features of dissipation, the haggard spectacle of prostitution, the inanity of vicious idleness, the menace of unbridled passion, of deliberate revenge, curtailed behind human features, and heard remote, sometimes like thunders on the bosom of darkness,—in short, the conflicts of interest, the wiles of dishonesty, the deep laid snares of covetousness,” which now meet us on every hand, would disappear. Two hundred thousand immortal beings, a large portion of whom are now pressing hard on each other in the broad and much-trodden way to death, now with conflicting interests and agitated passions, would at once commence the march to immortality. Hand in hand, with peaceful step and tranquil heart,—with many songs of praise, and many prayers,—they would tread along the banks of the river of life, calm in view of the shadowy vale of death; elevated with the hope of immortal peace.

Our main inquiry now returns. Would such a work of grace be desirable in a city like this, or in any or all of the cities of our land? In answer to this inquiry,

(1.) I suggest, first, the influence of a city on the

country at large. I need not attempt to prove that that influence is vast. In all that pertains to fashion, to literature, to morals, to religion, the influence of a city is incalculable. A large part of the fashions of the land, embracing a great many questions about economy, and the proper modes and objects of life, and about *honesty*, too, in contracting and paying debts, are controlled by cities. Paris, on one subject, has given law to the most of Europe and of the world; and this city influences hundreds of thousands of immortal beings, either directly or indirectly, in the same manner. Say what we will, a large portion of mankind is guided by what is implied by the word *fashion*. Who can estimate the importance, therefore, of such an influence of religion as shall effectually check extravagance of life, and turn the thoughts of men to the sober objects for which they should live? On the *literature* of a people, no less than on its fashions, cities give law extensively. A large portion of the light reading of the world is formed, first for the inhabitants of cities, and then for those portions of the country that can be made to imitate them. From cities, as from centres, goes forth that vast amount of romance and poetry which is doing so much to undermine all just morality in this nation, and to destroy the souls of men. The prevalence of pure Christianity in our cities, pervading all hearts, would arrest to a great extent this influence, and turn the attention of men to subjects more worthy of their immortal nature. The power of the newspaper press in cities is felt also throughout the land. It gives tone and character to thousands of presses in the smaller towns and villages. Who can estimate the effect that *would* be produced, if there were such a religious influence in cities as should make those fountains always pure? Such it *would be*, if the sentiments of the community were right; and one general revival of religion in our cities that

should secure such an influence on the press as should close every newspaper establishment on the Sabbath, as should exclude all commendation of the theatre, and as should banish every advertisement and sentiment such as a Christian father would be unwilling his sons or daughters should read, would send an influence throughout the land.

I need not say that the influence of a city is direct and almost omnipotent on a large circle of surrounding villages. Could the mighty population, which, in the summer months, is poured out from our cities on the Sabbath, by steamboats, and cars, and other vehicles, be restrained by the influence of religion; could they be induced to enter the sanctuary themselves, and spend the day in the worship of God, what a change would be produced at once in a wide circle of towns around us! How peaceful to them would the Sabbath become! What a corrupting influence would be at once withdrawn! Then, indeed, a village near a city would not be regarded as necessarily accursed. Then it would not have occasion to complain of the obvious *injustice* done by its overgrown neighbour, in pouring forth its legions of the profane, the unprincipled, and the intemperate, to disturb the peace and corrupt the morals of others.

I observed, also, before, that in a large city almost every portion of the land has its representatives. From all parts of the country and the world they come for business or for pleasure. Who can calculate what would be the influence of a general revival of religion in those minds, and on the portions of the land from whence they came? The revival in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost was felt almost immediately in all parts of the then known world, by the return of the "strangers" who were converted there. There is scarcely one nook or corner of our vast republic that would not be influenced by such a work of grace. Cities in a

nation are like the heart in man. Each stroke at the centre of life sends out influences for good or evil to the extremities, and is felt with healthful or destructive influence there. I need not add, if this be so, how responsible is the work of the Christian ministry here ! how solemn the obligations of every member of the church of Christ !

(2.) A second consideration to which I refer, is the worth of the souls of the multitudes congregated in cities. I by no means mean to be understood as saying that a soul is of more value here than elsewhere ; of any more worth in the most splendid mansion than in the humblest abode of the poor. But what I wish to say is, that we may be more deeply affected with their value ; we may become more deeply impressed with a sense of their danger. The scene itself is more impressive ; the events that are passing daily before the eyes are better adapted to affect the heart. Immortal beings are crowded together ; the busy, thoughtless multitude is constantly moving on before the eyes. The dense throng is passing by, regardless of admonition, and deaf to entreaty and to warning. A man travelling over an uncultivated prairie, or a waste of sands, might meet here and there, at far distant intervals, a stranger,—and then pass on again amidst the lonely wastes. There would be little to rouse the mind in regard to the necessity of a mighty heavenly influence on the soul of the solitary man ; and if he were disposed to present to him the subject of religion, there would be nothing in the circumstances to crowd it from the mind. But when a *city* is entered, how different is the scene ! I look out of my window, and the dense throng of all ages and conditions rushes on. Strangers to me and to each other, they are moving on, an unbroken procession, all the day, to eternity. I pass by the door of a theatre, and hundreds of immortal beings, thoughtless and *unconcerned* about the future, are leaving the place of

amusement and corruption. I go into the marts of business, and there is a dense and jostling crowd, anxious only for gain. I think of the brilliant party, and of the assembly-room, and there is another throng "with steps light and airy as the footsteps of Aurora," not less regardless of their immortal destiny. I think of the glitter of dress there, and the splendour of apartments, and the charms of music, and the brilliancy of wit, and the gracefulness of the dance; and all these are unconcerned about their undying doom. I think of the low places of sensuality and wretchedness; of beastly intemperance, and of degrading vice; and there is another group equally regardless of their immortal destiny. Wherever you go, a dense throng surrounds you,—a busy, active, restless, *unhappy*, dissatisfied multitude; a vast procession going to the grave, all under sentence of death, all sinners, all exposed to the eternal wrath of God. Each one of them has a soul, whose value no numbers can compute; a soul of more worth than all the riches which commercial talent, all combined, has ever gained, or can ever gain, in this city, and which shall live in bliss or in woe when all that wealth shall be forgotten. Of their high powers, of their immortal destiny, of what God the Saviour has done for them, they are unconscious, or, if they are conscious, they disregard it all. They are living for other objects; and their attention can by *no human means* be turned to the subject of their own souls' salvation.

Now it is not madness to ask where they will be a thousand years hence; nor to inquire what is probably to be their doom. Infidelity may sneer at such a suggestion, and stupidity may laugh; but a heathen monarch wept at the thought that his army, the greatest that had been ever raised, would be dead in a hundred years; and a greater than any heathen monarch wept over the destiny of a great and guilty population passing on like this to the bar of God.

All the great interests of this thoughtless throng lie beyond the tomb. If they have none there, their life is a bubble, a vapour, a gorgeous illusion, a changing cloud, a mist on the mountain side. All in which they are now so busy is soon to vanish away. Whether they are rich or poor, honoured or despised, bond or free, caressed or hated, can make no difference with them in a few years. Whether there is an eternity or not, these things are of trifling importance. How soon is the most exquisite earthly pleasure past! The charm of the sweetest melody, how soon it dies away on the ear! The tenderest ties of friendship, how soon are they severed! The most princely wealth, how soon must it be left! The widest reputation, how soon must we cease to enjoy it! And so with the bitterest grief, the keenest sorrow, the most agonizing pain, how soon is it gone! And of what real importance are all these to the throng that is seeking them as the grand business of life? The vapour that you see in the morning, as it lies on the mountain side, of what importance can it be whether it be admired by a few more or a few less mortals, or whether it roll a little higher or a little lower, since it will soon vanish in the beams of the morning sun? So of the vapour of life. Soon is it gone, and another generation shall succeed; as to-morrow another short-lived mist shall be seen, where to-day that vanished away. The cloud that you see lie along the western sky as the sun sinks behind the hills in a summer's eve, so gorgeous, so changing, so beautiful, so lighted up with ever-varying richness of hue by the lightning of the summer eve; of what importance is it whether a few more or less tints be painted on it, or whether a few more or a few less eyes gaze upon it, for the darkness of midnight will soon conceal it all. The insects that you see flutter in the evening rays, so happy, so calm, *so still*, so graceful in their motions, are moving with the

shades of night, to be seen no more. So move on the dense, the busy multitudes of this city! And I was about to say, O that they *were* like that vapour, to vanish for ever; or that gorgeous cloud, to sink unconsciously into night; or the insects of the evening, to live no more! But it is not so. That vapour vanishes, and is not seen again. That changing cloud is dissipated, and the tiny nations die, not to live again. But not so with the multitudes here. To the shades of the night of death they move on, but they emerge in an immortal existence beyond; and all their great interests are there. There they begin to live. There they will live on when stars and suns cease to shine, and when rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away; when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and when the throne of God, occupied by the dread Eternal King, shall be revealed. Yes, thoughtless trifler, yes, as long as God is to endure you are to live; and as sure as it is that God Himself shall never die, so sure it is that *your* soul shall never cease to exist.

Now who can say that it would be irrational, or undesirable, that all this multitude should be simultaneously impressed with the importance of religion and the worth of the soul? Suppose it should be attended with a temporary suspension of the business, or with a permanent suspension of what now constitutes the main pleasures of this life. Is it to be deemed fanatical that the affairs of this life should be allowed to give way, for a little while, for the more important things of another world? Is this world of darkness and of sin so vastly important that none of its affairs are ever to be suspended for the purposes of another world? Is the struggle for place, and power, and wealth never to be arrested, to attend to more important interests? I do not believe that a general revival of religion in our cities would interfere really with any thing necessary to their

prosperity, or would cause even a temporary suspension of anything truly valuable to the welfare of society. But if it did, shall man say that these things are *never* to be suspended to attend to more important concerns? Not thus determines the great Lawgiver of men, and the best judge of what is needful for human welfare. If *His* judgment were followed, and His counsel and command obeyed, *all* labour would be suspended for one day in seven. The counting-room, the assembly-room, the places of amusement every where would be closed; the steam-boat, the car, the stage-coach would stand still; the axe, the hammer, and the chisel would be laid aside; and the world, calm and peaceful, like Eden, would give itself to the labours of charity, and to a preparation for heaven. Does God never arrest the active movements of the world in any other way? What does He when the stout man is laid on a bed of pain? What means the scene when all his worldly plans are arrested, and he is pale in death? The truth is, if a man's great interests are beyond the tomb, no law of propriety is violated if these great interests are allowed to press upon the soul, and even to arrest, if need be, his incessant care for worldly gain and for fame.

But there would be excitement, it may be said, if this great multitude were to attend to the subject of religion, and if there were a general revival. There are excitements, it is said, in all revivals. But, I pray you, is there no excitement in these cities now? From whence comes the objection that revivals are mere scenes of excitement? From that man *excited* throughout the whole week in the pursuit of gain, feverish and restless, and unacquainted for one whole hour at a time with calm thought and repose; from that man whose life is spent in the whirlwind of political controversy, or in the career of ambition; from that calm and interesting group preparing for the splendid party and the

dance? O *there* all is calm and serene; but in religion all is excitement and commotion! Well may this objection be heard from the excited, agitated, tumultuous population of a city; a population, more than any other on earth, living in scenes of excitement; unhappy when they are not excited; fostering everywhere the means of excitement; and resisting all the means which the friends of religion can use to bring them to sober thought and calm reflection. What we aim at is that this excitement may be laid aside, and that the now busy multitude may be brought to *think soberly* about the immortal destiny beyond the tomb. We aim that they may lay down the exciting romance or novel, and take up the Bible, full of sober truth; that they may forsake the theatre, a place of mere excitement, and find happiness in the calm of the closet, and the sober employments of the fire-side; that they may turn away from the agitating scenes of political strife, and from the exciting of envy, and malice, and green-eyed jealousy, and ambition, and from the intoxicating bowl and the dance of pleasure, and devote themselves to the sober business of religion. Excitement, say you, in a revival! O, if Christ required me to endeavour to produce such excitement in a revival as I see every day in this city; if He required that men should give themselves up to the mere influence of feeling, and day-dreams, and agitating passions, and unfounded hopes, as they are required to by the world; I should expect to hear the objection that it was all mere excitement, and that such a work could not be the work of God. But no. I plead for soberness of thought; for calm investigation; for a state of mind where every improper emotion may be allayed, and where the soul may be brought to look calmly and soberly at the great realities of eternity. Do I address one here who does not know that such sober feeling would become the condition of man, and that it is desirable that

such deep emotion should take the place of the agitated and tumultuous feelings which reign in a great community like this?

(3.) A revival of religion is desirable in cities, in order to avert the wrath of God, and save them from the judgments of heaven. Evils pour into our great cities like floods from all quarters of the world; and who can be ignorant of the doom of cities in times past? It has been on cities that the most fearful of all the plagues of heaven have fallen; and not a few dilapidated walls, or half-ruined temples, stand now amidst far extended ruins, as monuments of the wrath of heaven. Not a few have been blotted out, and the places where they stood made pools of water or uninhabitable deserts, by the vengeance of Heaven. Who can forget Sodom, or Gomorrah, or Babylon, or Tyre, or Thebes, or Memphis, or Petra? And who can be ignorant of the desolations by the plague and the pestilence that have swept through these abodes of congregated human guilt? The reason has been, that God could smite *many* guilty there, while few of the innocent would suffer. All over the world the principal monuments of the Divine vengeance have been cities and large towns. Long may the walls of a city stand, but death shall have done its last work within; long may temples, like that at Baalbec, stand, while all the worshippers, long since smitten by the wrath of God, may sleep with the dead; long may a city be marked out and distinguished by its ruins and its sepulchres, like Petra, without a solitary living inhabitant, a city of the dead. All over the ancient world the plains are strewed with the ruins of cities, the monuments of indignant Heaven against their follies, their pride, their luxury, and their sensuality.

We know what would have saved them. Ten righteous men would have saved one of the worst of them. Nineveh *was saved* by repentance; Babylon might have been spared

if she had humbled herself; and Jerusalem would have been saved if she had not crucified the Son of God. Religion, prompting to temperance, and industry, and chastity, and honesty, and prayer, would have saved Babylon, and Tadmor, and Tyre, and Ephesus, and Alexandria, and Athens; and, occupying as they did the most eligible situations on earth for commerce, they might to-day have been splendid cities, smiling under the favour of the Almighty.

And what can save the cities of our land? The same thing only that would have saved Gomorrah and Babylon. Let us not dream that they are beyond the wrath of God. Let us not suppose that the eyes of God are closed on the enormous masses of guilt in these abodes of congregated sinners. Babylon was once as secure as we are, and as confident of her future glory as we can be of the prosperity of this beautiful city. The inhabitants of Rome once breathed as pure an air as we do, and Tyre commanded as wide a commerce as any seaport in our land. The God who turned Babylon into standing pools, and made wild beasts cry in her desolate houses, and satyrs dance there, (Isaiah xiii. 21, 22,) and who has caused the *malaria* to settle around Rome, spreading death on the once healthful plains of Italy, and has made Tyre a barren rock where the solitary fisherman dries his net, can as easily destroy *our* commerce, or fill our streets with pestilential air. Have our aged men forgotten the sad desolation of 1793, when the angel of death walked through these streets as he did once in the camp of Sennacherib? Have *we* ceased to remember the scenes in 1832, when the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day spread a universal gloom over this city? How easy for that God to visit us again!

(4.) I refer to one other consideration, showing the desirableness of revivals of religion in the cities of our

land. I refer to their influence on future times. The question whether revivals of religion may exist there, and in what way they may be promoted, is of not less importance than any other which pertains to the welfare of our nation. Look over the map of our country. Only about two hundred years have elapsed since the foot of the pilgrim first trod these western shores. Then a vast interminable forest spread its shades all over this land, broken in upon only by the prairies or the lakes that opened their bosom to the sun, or by the floods that rolled on to the ocean. There the sound of the woodman's axe had not been heard. The vast solitude had been disturbed only by the savage war-cry. Not a bridge was thrown over the streams; not a road penetrated the deep forest; not a sail whitened these bays and seas; not a boat, save the fragile bark of birch, was upon the waters; not a city sent its hum up to heaven; not a village, save the temporary abodes of wandering savages, was on the vast landscape. Two centuries have gone, and how changed the scene! Our cities already rival those of the old world; and when some half a dozen on other continents are named, ours come next in the numbers of their population, and are already among the first in commercial importance. As if by magic, they start up all over the land; and even while the remains of the forest stand around them, palaces rise, and wealth flows there as to a centre, and the din of commerce is heard afar.

Can any one fail to see in this fact the necessity of revivals of religion in those cities? How else shall it be propagated, but by that rapid mode where the Spirit of God bears the truth to the hearts of multitudes, and turns them simultaneously to God? They are adapted to the excited and ardent movement everywhere manifested in our land. All in those cities is free, and generous, and active, and mighty. There is an energy and zeal in the

affairs of the world, which is fitted to make men great and glorious in religion as in commerce. There is an ardour that needs only to be directed to the concerns of the soul, to be adapted to the times in which we live, and to the great enterprise of the conversion of the world.

What vast multitudes are yet to swarm in those cities! What countless numbers are there to live and to die! How soon will the present busy generation be gone, to give place to another as busy, as active, as immortal! What is to be the doom of the advancing millions? That inquiry is to be answered in part by the character of the present generation, and by the answer to the question, whether the Spirit of God shall descend in glorious revivals of religion. In these streets other generations are to tread,—as busy as we are. They will occupy the stores which you now occupy; dwell in the houses where you now dwell; until the time shall come for them to pull down those houses and stores, and to build new ones for other generations to come. They will moor their vessels to the same wharves, until those vessels shall be useless, and shall give place to others. They will go forth and look upon our graves; read the letters on our tombs, until they become illegible; and then *they* will lie down in the grave, to be superseded, and in their turn, too, to be forgotten. Unless some judgment is stirred up in heaven, “red with uncommon wrath,” that shall sweep this city with the besom of destruction, more millions by far may yet live *here* than now comprise the whole inhabitants of our country. *We* are just beginning our career. The cities of our land are just starting into being. In the far distant future I see the shadowy forms of advancing millions of men. They are coming to enter into our houses, and churches, and stores, and to receive their impressions from what they shall find there when they arrive.

Now what I wish to say is, that these cities can be saved from being corrupting spots, concentrated pests in our land, only by the influence of religion, and religion now. Tell me, ye who doubt this, whether power and wealth saved Babylon and Rome. Tell me whether the ship laden with gold and the merchandise of the East saved Tyre. Tell me whether philosophy and learning saved the cities of Greece and Egypt. Tell me whether the chisel of Phidias and Praxiteles saved Athens. Tell me whether the Coliseum saved Rome, or its splendid marble structures saved Corinth. O no,—not one of them : nor will colleges, or schools, or marble palaces, or fountains, or luxury, or wealth, save one of the cities of our land. Without religion they will lie as corrupt and corrupting masses on the bosom of the nation, till Heaven can bear it no longer ; and then *they* will be swept with the vengeance of an offended God. Religion, religion only,—the pure religion of the cross, descending like floods, and flowing like rivers, only can save these cities from destruction. When we think of these things ; when we look over the numbers of the cities of our land ; when we remember their accumulating guilt ; when we look onward to future times, and see what they are destined yet to be, and backward, and see the memorials of wrath standing thick where cities once stood on the plains of the old world, how appropriate the petition of our text, “ O LORD, REVIVE THY WORK IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS, IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS MAKE KNOWN ; IN WRATH REMEMBER MERCY ! ”

SERMON VII.

THE HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS IN CITIES.

“AND when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!”—Luke xix. 41, 42.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”—Matt. xxiii. 37.

WHAT tender and affectionate language is this! What love and compassion are here evinced! What a scene is here presented! THE SON OF GOD IN TEARS! The Redeemer weeping in view of the impending doom of a great and guilty city! Why were those tears? And why these expressions of love and tenderness? It is not difficult to answer these questions. In no situation can we well conceive of more emotions crowding into a human bosom than struggled in the heart of the Son of God, and constrained Him to weep. Before Him was the capital of the nation; the temple standing with rich magnificence; the altar of sacrifice; the place where the praises of JEHOVAH had been celebrated for ages. In that city He had preached the Gospel, and called the inhabitants to embrace Him as the Messiah; but in vain. There He had sought to turn them to God, and thus to avert the heavy doom impending over them for their sins; but all in vain. He had been there rejected, His ministry despised, and His claims set at nought; and He saw that there the great act of national crime, which outpeers all other deeds of guilt, was about to

be perpetrated—in His own murder ; and that for these things the city was to be filled soon with woe, and blood, and horror ; the temple fired and razed to its foundations ; the imposing rites of religion to cease ; and the inhabitants of the city and the land that should survive the siege to be borne into captivity, or scattered to the ends of the world, to be re-gathered to the land of their fathers no more. More than this, He saw heavy judgments impending over them as sinners ; and the fearful doom awaiting the rejecters of the Son of God in the future world. For these things His eyes ran down with tears ; and of all the scenes of moral grandeur ever witnessed in this world, none have equalled that when the Son of God, seated on the Mount of Olives, cast His eyes over the city spread out before Him, and gave vent to His feelings in a flood of tears.

I see no reason to doubt that, if He were again on earth, He would evince the same feelings in surveying the great cities that now exist. I doubt not that in Paris, in London, in Canton, in New York, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in Cincinnati, He would see much that would peculiarly excite to tears. I do not see why Jerusalem was so pre-eminent either in numbers, in wickedness, or in the approaching doom of its inhabitants, as to claim exclusively the compassion, and call forth the tears, of the Son of God. The same thing substantially will be found to exist in all these cities as in Jerusalem ; the same combined resistance of Himself and His Gospel ; the same concentrated wickedness ; the same accumulation of vice, licentiousness, pride, and sensuality ; and the same awful doom impending over the congregated masses of guilt. *One* reason of His weeping then was, that His Gospel had been there so unsuccessful. He had preached in Galilee ; He had trod the shores of the lake of Gennesareth ; He had proclaimed His message in numerous country villages, and among the hamlets of the

poor, with eminent success. But in the great towns, in Capernaum, in Bethsaida, in Chorazin, and pre-eminently in Jerusalem, He had met with peculiar obstacles to the success of the Gospel; which in one case called forth the heaviest denunciations which ever fell from His lips: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" and which in the other excited Him now to tears!

I derive from the text the sentiment, that Christ found peculiar obstacles to the reception of His Gospel in cities and large towns; and my object at this time is to show what some of those obstacles are. My last Sermon was on the importance of revivals of religion in cities and large towns. The present Sermon will be a continuation of the same subject in general, or another aspect of it, by showing the peculiar hinderances to religion existing there, and hence the importance and necessity of REVIVALS to meet and overcome those hinderances.

I. I invite your attention, in the first place, to the obstacles to revivals arising from the very constitution or organization of cities and large towns. The idea which I wish to present is, that there is a large portion of the population that is almost entirely inaccessible by the Gospel, or designedly beyond the reach of the ordinary means of grace.

"God made the country, and man made the town," said the sweetest of British bards, though in this case with perhaps rather more truth than poetic beauty. Christ found, as has already been observed, a country and a village population accessible to the Gospel, and the triumphs of His personal ministry were mainly there. There are few, comparatively, of very elevated rank there; few in affluence. There are fewer low and debasing vices; few, comparatively, of the more fascinating allurements; few extended and

compacted combinations of guilt; few to whom and to whose dwellings those who are disposed to do good may not find a welcome and ready access.

But the moment you enter a city, with all its external beauty and splendour; with all its courtesy and refinement; with all its science and art; nay, with all its healthful institutions of morality and religion; you are struck with the almost entire exclusion of the *extremes* of the population from all access by the Gospel and the means of grace. On the one hand, there is that vast portion of a city population which may be regarded as the *lower stratum* of society. I mean that dense and dark mass, the population of alleys, and cellars, and garrets,—the ignorant, the degraded, the grossly sensual, the idle, the worthless,—the refuse of society, and “the offscouring of the world,” always existing in a city, though often concealed from the stranger, and whose existence is disregarded, or whose condition is unknown, by that half of the race who “know not how the other half lives.” Could the veil be suddenly lifted from the crime and abomination, the degraded vices, and the low scenes of guilt and profligacy, with which even a city like this abounds, and could we see it as the All-seeing Eye sees it, we should start back with horror, familiar as we in some degree become with it. Let an individual go at leisure through our streets, and lanes, and alleys; let him go to the foul retreats of drunkenness, gluttony, and pollution; let him look on the wretches burrowed in these foul recesses; let him look at the houses of infamy, and see the thousands that visit those houses,—they alike with their inmates inaccessible to all the means of salvation, and with consciences “seared as with a hot iron,”—and he will have some idea of the obstacles which stand in the way of revivals of religion in cities. Let him think of the criminals who throng our courts and crowd our prisons; the paupers

in our almshouses, most of them made such by intemperance ; the beggars patrolling our streets, whose story is, in general, but a veil to their faults ; but, most of all, of that numerous banditti of thieves, robbers, swindlers, pilferers, incendiaries, burglars, and ruffians, whose concealment from the public eye alone prevents alarm,—the thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, who are here congregated and affiliated in various ways in infamy and crime ; and he will be at no loss to understand some of the obstacles which exist here to the spread of all religion, and especially to revivals.

A very large portion of this class is inaccessible by any means which are used, or which can be at present used, to spread among them the Gospel. They enter no church from year to year. Many an individual has lived more than twenty years in this city, and never entered a place of public worship. Multitudes of them have no Bible ; or if they had, they could not read it, or would immediately pawn it to procure the means of intoxication. Multitudes of them spurn a tract ; or if they did not, it would be useless to them. Multitudes of them study concealment ; practise crimes which cannot be exposed to the light of day ; and alike shrink away from a police-officer and from a minister of religion.

But I wish especially to remark, not on their inaccessibility, but on the fact that they are not in a condition where revivals of religion can be expected, such as I am advocating, and such as have hitherto, in general, blessed this land. The most powerful revivals of religion in this country have occurred in those places where the mass of the people are the best educated, and where they are most sober in their lives, most virtuous and industrious, and regular in their attendance on the house of God. But this has not been the general character of revivals in this land. They have been the fruits of sound instruction, and of a care-

ful training in common schools and in Sabbath schools; they have occurred where the Gospel has been long and faithfully preached, and those who have been converted have been usually those whose minds have been most sedulously taught by the labours of the ministry; they have occurred eminently in our colleges and higher female seminaries,—places far removed from mere enthusiasm, and places where God has made intellectual culture contribute to the purity and power of revivals. But how different all this from the wretched, untaught, and degraded population of our cities! Even, therefore, if we had access to this immense mass; if we had ministers enough to go to them and preach; or if every Christian should become a missionary to them, and bear the tidings of salvation; their very ignorance and degradation would oppose a most formidable barrier to pure revivals of religion. That dark mass must be elevated; these hordes of wandering and wretched children must be gathered into schools and taught: these fountains of poison, now pouring desolation and woe into so many dwellings, must be closed; the Bible must be placed in these houses, and the inmates taught to read it; and a long process of most self-denying instruction must be gone into, before, in our cities, there will be witnessed the revivals of purity and power which have so abundantly blessed the smaller towns and the villages of our land.

I have spoken of the low and degraded part of our population as opposing one obstacle to revivals. This is one extreme. And here is one great department of Christian effort where all our prayers and all our self-denial are demanded.

But there is another class at the other extreme of society in our great cities, that is not less inaccessible by the Gospel of Christ. It is that great department, “far above these Augean stables of sin and pain, which no Herculean labour

can cleanse, but connected with it by innumerable doors and headlong steps. This region appears brilliant and fair; its precincts resound with hilarity, music and songs; and it contains thousands of the opulent, the fashionable, and the gay; vice is clad in splendour here, and a spirit reigns which knows no moral law but inclination, and recognises no God but pleasure." For guilt often treads flowery paths, and goes up the heights of honour and ambition. It reclines on a couch of ease; rests on a bed of down; puts on robes of adorning; is seen in the joyousness of the mazy dance; and moves amidst the civilities and courtesies of refined life. For this class distant climes pour in their luxuries; the theatre opens its doors; splendid mansions rise,—the cost of tens of thousands of dollars,—with gorgeous decorations, to furnish places for dances and revelry; for this class art is exhausted; night becomes more brilliant than day; and the cup of pleasure is drunk deep and long, and music lavishes her charms to give pleasure to the ear and joy to the heart. In such circles we look in vain for prayer; for the serious reading of the Bible; for an anxious concern for the soul; for a humble and penitent sitting at the feet of the Redeemer. And we look as really in vain there for solid happiness. What are often the characteristics of such circles? It is a world of splendour without enjoyment; of professions without sincerity; of flattery without heart; of gaiety which mocks the real feelings of the soul; and of smiles when the heart is full of envy and chagrin; a cup of hilarity whose dregs are wormwood and gall; scenes of momentary pleasure, to be succeeded by long nights of painful reminiscences and by despair. There is "restless pride without gratification; ostentation without motive or reward; ceremony without comfort; laughter without joy; smiles which conceal rancour; vociferous praise alloyed with envy, and dying away with the whispers of

calumny;" compliance with the laws of fashion which are hated; and a servitude to customs where the chains eat deep into the flesh. Think you that these people, "whose every step appears light and airy as the radiant footstep of Aurora, whose very form and features are luminous with contentment and hope," are happy? Do they live on in a continual round of unmingled enjoyment? No. The immortal mind is not thus made. The brilliance of these things strikes the eye, but conveys no pleasure to the heart; and in the very midst of all this external show and glitter, the conscience, true to itself and to God, may be uttering the language of rebuke, and the recollection of all this folly may bathe the cheek and the pillow in tears.

But my principal object is not to remark on the folly of these scenes; for, so far as their fellow-mortals are concerned, men and women have a right to spend their money and be as foolish as they please: nor do I wish to remark on the hollowness of all this, and its destitution of happiness, but on the fact that it stands in the way of revivals, and of religion in all forms. Unlike the other description of the population of a city already adverted to in most respects, they are like them in this. Thousands of them are as ignorant of the Gospel as they are. The Bible is, indeed, in their habitations, but it is not read; not because they cannot read it, but because they will not. They enter no sanctuary; and no one bears the Gospel to them. A nominal connexion may be held with some Christian congregation to secure some right of burial, for there is some thinking about death as a matter in which property is involved; but they are strangers to the house of God. Many a splendid mansion in this city is tenanted by those who enter no house of worship. And who carries the Gospel to them? Who tells them that they have a soul? Who reminds them that they are going to the judgment bar, or to hell? Alas! the

messenger that bears the tract to the humble mansion of the poor, is often turned away from the splendid abode of the rich. The minister of religion goes not there; for to do it would be to violate a law of etiquette, which, as a stranger, he may not disregard; or, if he goes, daunted, it may be, by wealth, and splendid furniture, and rank, and perhaps by high intellectual endowment, he seeks to relieve his conscience by some time-serving message; speaks, if at all, in flattering accents of the cross, and would quail before an anticipated frown or rebuke, should he faithfully speak of sin and of the judgment to come. In scenes like these, too, who looks for friendship for revivals of religion? Who is disappointed to find them regarded there as wildfire, fanaticism, and disorder? In the character, therefore, the habits, the manners, the inaccessibility of these large classes of a city population, is found the first obstacle to revivals of religion in a city, and an obstacle which nothing but the mighty power of God can overcome.

II. A second great hinderance to revivals, growing out of the nature of a city organization, arises from what may properly be called the want of *sympathy* or *common ties* in such a community. It strikes a stranger as singular, that people separated only by the wall of a dwelling should be strangers to each other; and that in a dense and crowded population there should not be the strongest conceivable ties binding together man and man. Yet the estrangement and want of acquaintance are familiar; and it would not be difficult to explain it; but the fact itself is all that is needful to our purpose now. All know that neighbours are often strangers; and that the mere fact of worshipping in the same church edifice, or of sitting down at the table of the same Master, does not of necessity produce acquaintanceship, and create bonds of sympathy and love. Almost unavoidably, different ranks of life, even in the church, keep separate

from each other ; often there is a melancholy coldness and distance that is chilling to a stranger, or to a warm-hearted Christian ; and while there may be, and usually is, no *bad* feeling, and no root of bitterness, yet there is the want of that intimate acquaintanceship, and that strong common sympathy, which Christ contemplated when He prayed for His disciples, “that they all might be one,” and of that actual and active love which He contemplated when He commanded them to “love one another, as the Father had loved Him,” and which was so striking among the early Christians when the heathen persecutors were constrained to say, “Behold how these Christians love one another !”

Now, revivals of religion are not caused by mere sympathy ; but, as I have endeavoured in a former lecture to show, they call into action some of the most powerful and pervading sympathies of our nature. They are closely connected with the fact, that God has grouped men together into families, circles of friendship, neighbourhoods, and churches. They are intimately connected with the fact, that when one part of the social circle is affected, either by joy or grief, the emotion kindles from heart to heart, and family to family, and circle to circle, until the whole community is pervaded by a common feeling. And where in a community there are, if I may so speak, independent *strata* of society, it often happens in a revival that one is affected and not another ; where all have common sympathies and feelings, all partake of the common emotion. That this should be found in a country population, where men are, in general, on the same level ; where every man knows his neighbour, and is accustomed to sympathize in all his wants, and woes, and joys ; where difference of rank never separates them ; and where the joy of conversion will strike a responsive chord throughout the community,—is not to be wondered at. That such might not be the case in the population of a city,

and especially in a city church, I shall not deny. I speak only of *the fact* as it actually exists.

I can never, while "life, and breath, and being last, or immortality endures," forget the time when God was pleased to bless my labours in a most remarkable and extensive revival of religion in a large country congregation. I had at its commencement some five hundred members of the church, and near five hundred families that were nominally connected with my charge, covering a region of country nearly ten miles in diameter. For more than a hundred years the Gospel had been faithfully preached there, and with eminent success. Revival after revival had crowned those labours; and since the days when God so blessed this land under the ministry of Whitefield, Edwards, and the Tennants, scarce ten years had elapsed in which there had not been a revival there. At the time I speak of, a simultaneous impression was produced, under the ordinary preaching of the Gospel, on the entire community. It was a state of increasing seriousness, and of attention to the preaching of the Gospel. There was an unusual spirit of prayer; a deep anxiety on the part alike of the pastor and of the church members for the salvation of souls. The emotions deepened until the heart became full; and all in the community were willing to converse on the subject of religion. Scenes of amusement and pastime gradually gave way to the deep business of religion; no voice was raised in opposition; no noise, no disorder, characterized the places where men had assembled to ponder the great question of their salvation. On all the extended community an influence had come down silent as the sunbeams, and gentle and refreshing as the dews of heaven. There was deep sympathy in all that community; a calm, subdued, serious, and holy spirit of conversation, which showed that the "God of peace" was there.

Who can doubt that if such a power were to descend on the population that occupies the same extent of territory here; if the same heavenly influence should pervade the two hundred thousand here that pervaded the comparatively few hundreds there, and if the same deep inquiry were to exist here on the topics pertaining to our eternal welfare; if the effect were to be seen in closing the places of sinful amusement, in directing the steps of the guilty to the house of God, and in bringing out the lost and loathsome victims of crime, and lust, and disease, to the light of heavenly day; and in filling the mansions of the rich and the gay with the sweet peace of religion, and of holy communion with God;—who can doubt that such a scene would be in accordance with man's exalted nature, and would be a spectacle on which hovering angels would look with wonder, gratitude, and joy? But, alas! tens of thousands here are far away from any such heavenly influence; thousands sneer at the name of revivals, and perhaps some hundreds of professed Christians would have no sympathy in such a work of grace.

III. I mention, as a third obstacle resulting from the nature of a city organization, the fact that wickedness is concentrated, organized, and embodied there. If there is any peculiar guilt on earth, it will be found there. If there is any that can exist only by combination and alliance, any that depends on confederacy and organization, any that shrinks from the light of day, it would be found in the large capitals of the world. If there is any crime peculiarly dark, deep, offensive, loathsome in the sight of heaven, it will be found in such places. If Satan has any strongholds which he fortifies with peculiar care, and guards with peculiar vigilance, they are the large cities of the world. In all ages they have constituted, as they do now, the principal obstructions to the spread of religion;

and many, many a city has been doomed to destruction by God on account of its consummate wickedness, and because there was no other way to maintain His religion here below, than to sweep it with the besom of His wrath. So it was with the cities of the plain, in the time of Abraham, the principal barriers to the progress of righteousness, and the very *sewers* of iniquity. So it was with Babylon,—the proud oppressor,—doomed to ruin irretrievable and eternal, on account of its pride, cruelty, and opposition to God. So, as has already been remarked, Christ found the principal obstructions to *His* preaching in Chorazin, in Bethsaida, in Capernaum, and in Jerusalem. There was consummate wisdom in the plan of the builders of Babel, when they said, “Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven;” (Gen. xi. 4;) for the very object of building a city was to contravene the Divine purpose, and to set God at defiance; as it would seem, almost, had been often the design in the great cities of the world.

Since that time, it would almost seem as if the design for which they had been founded had been to concentrate evil, and oppose religion on earth. Tacitus long since described Rome as the *colluvies gentium*, “*the sink of nations*,” a description, the truth of which no one will doubt who is familiar with his history, or that of Gibbon. Dr. Johnson in a similar manner characterized London.

“London! the needy villain’s general home,
The common sewer of Paris and of Rome!
With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.
All that at home no more can beg or steal;
Or like a gibbet better than a wheel;
Hiss’d from the stage, or hooted from the court;
Their air, their dress, their politics import;

Obsequious, artful, voluble, and gay,
On Britain's fond credulities they prey."

"London."

That beautiful poet, too, who perhaps never erred in describing the characters and customs of men, or of society,—Cowper,—has told us what a city is in the following lines:—

"Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities, foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds,
In gross and pampered cities, sloth, and lust,
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst."

"Task," b. i.

On this fact, in regard to cities, as they have always existed, it would be needless here to dwell. Beautiful as they often are; rich, splendid, magnificent; the home of refinement, of courtesy, and accomplishment; the seat of science, and the nurse of the arts; I add, too, with thankfulness to God, the home often of deep piety and rich and liberal-hearted benevolence; yet they are the home, also, of every kind of infamy, of all that is false and hollow, and of all that fascinates, allures, and corrupts the hearts of men. There are found men of all nations, colours, characters, opinions. There men of splendid talents live to corrupt

by their example and their influence; there unbounded wealth is lavished to amuse, betray, and ruin the soul; there are the vortices of business and of pleasure that engulf all; and there are the most degraded and the worst forms of human depravity.

I speak here particularly of sins of combination and alliance, of sins *so* allied and interlocked that nothing can meet and destroy them but the mighty power of God in a revival of religion; sins which stand peculiarly opposed to the prevalence of religion. The infidel in the country village usually stands almost alone. He may gather a few disciples; but their *character* usually testifies to the nature of the opinions held, and prevents the extension of the evil. In this land, a frowning public opinion usually rests on him and his doctrines. But in this city, he may make as many converts as he pleases. He may *always* find enough to enable him to brave public opinion, and to keep him in countenance. The man of profaneness in the country village is usually almost alone. He mocks and curses his Maker with few to countenance him, and the burning *lens* of public indignation usually meets him wherever he goes. If he have a few companions, *they* are known, and their known character is a sort of check on the extension of the profaneness. But not so in the city. If he chooses to curse his Maker, he can do it when he pleases, and be sustained by as many as he chooses. If he prefers to do it on the wharves and in the gutters, he will find enough there to countenance him; if he chooses to do it in the streets, alas! he may find a patron every where, and can scarce turn a corner without being greeted by a fellow-labourer in the work of cursing. If he prefers to think that it is an accomplishment for a gentleman, he will find gentlemen enough, so called, to associate with. Who can take any accurate census of the actual number of abandoned females? who of this far greater

number of abandoned men, young and old, who are living in gross violation of the laws of heaven? Every great metropolis of the world in this respect bears a striking resemblance to Sodom; and it is matter of amazement that every great city does not meet its righteous doom. I might go over the whole catalogue of crimes that are marked on the calendar of human guilt, and we should find them all concentrated, organized, consolidated in our cities and large towns. There foul and offensive exhalations rise from the receptacles of human depravity; there volumes of curses roll up toward heaven; there the seducer practises his arts to inveigle the young; there tens of thousands riot in intemperance, and curse their Maker; there multitudes practise all arts of fraud and infamy; and there Satan, knowing the power of cities in all the surrounding regions, has established his strongholds, and fortifies and guards his possessions with all that skill and art can do.

Now, it is not so much to affirm that the proportion of the wicked in cities is greater than in the country, that I have dwelt on this point; it is to fix the attention on two or three features of the fact directly bearing on the subject before us.

One is, that sin exists here in combination and alliance. It is not dissocial and solitary. It is united, and interlocked, and interwoven with numerous customs of society. The *point* of my remarks, therefore, is, that sin in cities presents a solid front to the Gospel of Christ. It is kept in countenance. It resists the Gospel, confident that it *may* be resisted. Hence the necessity of revivals of religion. O what shall ever meet and destroy this combined and consolidated wickedness, but the power of the Spirit of God descending on the whole community, in answer to the prayers of Christians, and inclining these ten thousand alienated hearts to seriousness and to God?

Another feature is, that the arrangements for sin in a city peculiarly contemplate the young. Well does the enemy of God know that the church looks to them for its increase. Its hopes are these. Its prospects of purity, fervour, and of the final conquest of the world, are these. Cast an eye now over a city, and ask, For whom are the institutions of sin, licentiousness, and intemperance designed? Who are to be the victims? Who is to sustain them? Not much care is shown to propitiate the aged. Age has few passions that can be excited; and it is either fixed in principle beyond the hope of being seduced to profligacy, or it is already corrupt and ruined. An old man must soon leave the stage of action, and, whether virtuous or vicious, his opinions cannot long influence the world. Not so the young. There are passions in youth that may easily be enkindled; there are alluring arts that may readily be made to decoy them; and the wicked world looks to *them* to patronize and sustain them. Who is to sustain the numberless dram-shops licensed here under the authority of the laws in our city, and to license the future drunkards whose oaths and blasphemy are to roll up towards heaven? Our sons, if ten thousand arts of the tempter can break them away from the restraints of home, and can neutralize the effect of Sabbath-school instruction, and put back parental prayers unheard. Who are to be the patrons of the theatre? Your sons and daughters; and unless the love of pleasure can be implanted more than the love of God, soon might their doors be closed, to be opened no more. Thus every vice looks to the young for patronage; and ten thousand arts concentrate their influence to alienate the young from God, and to draw them down to death. Another feature is, the ease with which guilt here may be concealed. The most powerful protection of virtue in the country is public

opinion, and the assurance that the guilty there cannot escape from it. An eye of public vigilance is on every man, and his character is known and understood. Not so here. The guilty may flee away from every being but God, and practise his deeds of evil unknown. In a cellar, a garret, or a palace, at his pleasure, he may hide himself, and who can drag him out to the light of day? What is more, he may *so* conceal his guilt that his infamy shall not be suspected; or what is more and worse still, he may so combine with others as to modify public opinion, *and make virtue cease to blush when she gives him the hand.*

When one looks on these facts, he will cease to wonder that cities have everywhere presented formidable obstacles to revivals of religion. One question I have to submit, in conclusion, to those who bear the name of Christian. It is, whether their hearts would feel any joy at a work of grace that should pervade all this population, and fill these streets and dwellings with seriousness and the fear of God? A heathen monarch of a much greater city than this once rose up from his throne, and covered himself with sackcloth, and was followed by his court and nobles, and by all the people, in a solemn fast for three days. Who adjudges that the bosom of the king of Nineveh in this was swayed by any improper feeling? Another heathen monarch, at the head of two millions of men, sat down and wept. "In a hundred years," said he, "all that mighty host will be dead." The vision of Xerxes extended no farther. He had no tear to shed over their doom beyond the grave. How different that feeling from the view which excited the Redeemer to weep! *His* tears fell because He could see beyond the tomb; because He saw the unending career of the never-dying soul, and knew what it was if the soul should be lost. And this multitude that we see in this city; this gay, busy, thoughtless,

volatile, unthinking throng that sweep along these streets, or that dwell in these palaces, or that crowd these theatres, or these assembly-rooms, where, O where, will they be in a hundred years? Dead; all dead. Every eye will have lost its lustre; every frame its vigour; every rose shall have faded from the cheek; the charms of music shall no more entrance the ear; the fingers shall have forgotten the melody of the lute and the organ. Where will they be? In yonder heaven, or in yonder hell:—part, alas! how small a part! with ears attuned to sweeter sounds, and with eyes radiant with immortal brilliancy, and with a frame braced with vigour of never-dying youth. Part, alas! how large a part! in that world, a view of whose unutterable sufferings drew tears from the eyes of the Son of God! Each man that dares to curse JEHOVAH on His throne; each victim of intemperance and lust; each wretch on whom the eye fastens in the lowest form of humanity, has an immortal nature that shall live beyond the stars, and that shall survive when “the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll!” The shadowy vale of death will soon be passed, and the thoughtless and guilty throngs will be found amid the severe and awful scenes of eternal justice! Christian, pray, pray, O pray for a REVIVAL OF PURE RELIGION IN THE GUILTY CITIES OF OUR LAND!

SERMON VIII.

THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS IN REGARD TO REVIVAL

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”—Acts xvii. 16.

Two very opposite effects are produced on different minds by difficulties and embarrassments. One is to dispirit and dishearten; the other is to animate with augmented ardour and zeal. The former is the effect produced on the mass of mind; the latter is that produced on the few. The multitude become intimidated, and give over effort as hopeless; the few who are bold and resolute, who act from the convictions of principle and conscience, or who see a prize worth exertion, are stimulated to greater efforts by every new difficulty, and develop resources of invention and talent, before unknown to themselves, and surprising to their friends. This it is to be great; and this constitutes the real greatness of the few who have deserved and received the name.

The record of the visit of the Apostle Paul at Athens furnishes an illustration of this principle; and I know not that a better one can be found. It was the first time that he had been there; but not the time when he first learned its fame. He himself had been born in a city whose schools rivalled those of Athens; and there is reason to think that at some period of his life he had been familiar with the more distinguished classic productions in the Greek language; and he was certainly not disqualified for appreciating the eloquence and the elegant arts of that city. Longinus thus speaks of Paul: “The following men

are the boast of all eloquence, and of Grecian genius, viz., Demosthenes, Lysias, Æschines, Hyperides, Isæus, Anarchus, Isocrates, and Antiphon ; *to whom may be added Paul of Tarsus,*” certainly qualified to appreciate what to a classic mind must have been interesting, nay, almost entrancing, in Athens. Her schools, her academic groves, her wonders of art, it might have been supposed, would have attracted the attention of such a mind. What an opportunity for examining, for the first and perhaps the last time, the immortal works of Phidias and Praxiteles ! What an opportunity for mingling in the circles of the most refined society in the world ! How vain would it appear to be for such a stranger, a solitary and unknown man, to attempt to produce a change in the religious condition of that city, or to produce there a revival of religion !

The effect on his mind of a survey of the state of things there is described in my text. “His spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. The spirit of Paul was roused here, as it was everywhere, by the prevalence of sin ; and he was led to put forth augmented efforts, in view of the very difficulties before him.

In this instance we have an illustration of the feelings which a Christian should cherish in the midst of a great city. They were feelings such as Paul himself cherished in the midst of gay and voluptuous Corinth, when he resolved that he would know nothing there, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified ; which he had in Ephesus, where he laboured so assiduously for the overthrow of idolatry, and for the conversion of its multitudes to God ; and which he had in Antioch, in Philippi, and in Rome. I wish at this time, from the feelings thus manifested by Paul, to offer some remarks on the duties of Christians in cities and large towns, particularly with reference to revivals of

religion; and I shall set my views before you in a series of observations, all bearing on this point, to show what Christians ought to do to promote revivals of religion in such places.

I. My first observation is, that religion first showed its power, and especially in revivals of religion, in cities and large towns. There the Gospel met every form of human wickedness, and showed its power to triumph over all. In Jerusalem, the seat of pharisaical pride and hypocrisy, and of dependence on the mere forms of religion; in Antioch, the rich and commercial emporium of Syria, and the seat of all the affluence and luxury that commerce produces; in Ephesus, the strongest hold of idolatry, and the place to which tens of thousands resorted to pay their worship at the shrine of the most splendid temple in the heathen world; in Philippi, long the capital of Macedonia, and filled with all the sins that usually pertain to a court; in Corinth, the most gay, and voluptuous, and sensual, and dissipated city of the age,—the Paris of antiquity; and in Rome itself, the capital of the world, and, like London, the common sewer of the nations, as it was characterized by Tacitus; in all these places the Gospel showed its power, and achieved its earliest triumphs. In each one of these flourishing churches were established, and in each one, under the apostolic preaching, were witnessed all the phenomena that characterize religion now.

It must continue to be so, till the whole world is converted to God. Cities are, and will be, the centres of moral power; and their influence must be felt over all other portions of the world. Missionaries now go to great cities, just as the apostles did, and begin their work there. It is in such places as Constantinople, and Jerusalem, and Calcutta, and Canton, and Bankok, and Cairo, that the

triumphs of the Gospel are expected ; and to secure such places of influence is deemed as needful as it is for an invading army to seize upon the strong fortresses of a land. In our own country, therefore, and in other lands, Christians are to labour and pray now, as the apostles did, for the promotion of religion in cities and large towns.

II. My second remark is, that there is the same need of a revival of pure religion in these places, that there was in the cities that were visited by the apostles, and the same things to excite Christians to effort for their conversion which there were then. Were Paul to come now and visit this city, or any of the great cities of our land, as he did Athens, what would he find? What honour would he see put on God? What would he see to be the great and prevalent object of living? And what, with his recorded views of the character of men, and of the final destiny of the guilty, would he regard as the doom of the multitudes here? We may take this great city as a fair and favourable specimen of the character of the cities of our land. What would he find here? He would find indeed no idols, and no temples reared to false gods. Thanks to the God of our fathers, who directed hitherward the steps of men who feared His name, not an idol god has been made, nor an idol temple reared, since the white man first penetrated the forests of the new world ; and amidst all the works of art in our cities, the chisel of the sculptor has never been employed to engrave a god of stone. But in this city he would find more than a hundred thousand people without any form or semblance of religion. They enter no sanctuary ; they worship no God, true or false. They have not even gone so far as to rear, as the Athenians did, an altar “to the unknown God,”—the unknown God, amidst their rabble of divinities, who, they supposed, had come to save them from the pestilence. Along these streets

the pestilence has also spread, perhaps in as frightful a form as that described by Thucydides in Athens; and God, the true God, has interposed to save; but the multitude that were spared erected no altar to their unknown God to commemorate the event. He might go into some thousands of houses, and he would find no shrines, no Lares, no Penates, no form or mode of devotion. He would find their inmates devoted to *idols*, but idols without temples, save the temple of the heart. To Mammon or to Bacchus he might find them devoted, with an ardour never witnessed in Athens; but to these they have erected no altars. He would find many a splendid house where dwells a whole family with no form of devotion; who enter no sanctuary; who have no Sabbath, except for amusement; who live as though it were not worth inquiry or argument, whether there be a God and an eternity. He would find many who live to feast on the bounties of Providence without thanksgiving; who riot on the verge of the grave unalarmed; and who attend even their departed friends to the tomb with no more personal anxiety about their own preparation to die, than though the inscription made on the entrance to a cemetery in the capital of France during the Revolution, "Death is an eternal sleep," were settled to be the truth, and ought to be inscribed over every dwelling-place of the dead. But are they idolaters? As degraded, and often as sunken, as though they worshipped blocks of wood and stone; for they fix on other objects the affection due to God. Many even in this city have sunk to a depth of debasement to which the vilest form of idolatry rarely consigns its votaries; for even a *bad* religion has *some* restraints,—irreligion has none. Part worship wealth, part fashion; part do homage to low and debasing pleasures. And amidst the idol worship of Athens there was not a more effectual exclusion of the true God from the soul, than there

is from the hearts and habitations of tens of thousands in this city.

III. My third remark is, that it is chiefly on Christians that dependence can be placed to rouse the great and thoughtless multitudes of a city population to a sense of their guilt and danger. I say *chiefly*; for though we may hope something from the effects of the various dispensations of Providence in afflictions in arousing men; though we may rely somewhat on the fact that the consciences of men may be alarmed in view of their guilt and danger, and in the prospect of death; though we may hope that thoughtful inquiry may be aroused by the Divine Spirit in some minds without any visible means used; and though we may hope that some of the great mass may from time to time become sick of the vain world, and in their disgust inquire whether there is not comfort to be found in religion; yet the main hope is, that Christians will use their influence to bear the truth to them, convince them of their danger and their folly, and direct them to the Lamb of God. I say *Christians*,—meaning to include in this term the ministers of religion, with all the influence which can be derived from personal piety, learning, and eloquence, and all that can be derived from the respect which their office creates; other officers of the churches, with all the influence which their office creates, and with all that their private worth can add to their official influence; Sabbath-school teachers, with all the advantages which are furnished them from their access to the hearts of large numbers of the young; Christian parents, with all that there is of authority and tenderness in their relation to their children,—all of which should be tributary to the Gospel; Christian physicians, with all the influence which they have in the houses of the sick and the dying; Christian magistrates, with all the power of their office in restraining vice and recom-

mending virtue ; the aged with their ripe experience, the young with their ardour, and the middle-aged with the maturity of their judgment ; man with his energy and talent, and woman with her patience and tenderness in visiting the abodes of poverty and want. These constitute the reliance, under God, in promoting religion among the thoughtless masses of a city population. They are the enrolled, the disciplined, and the officered army which has been appointed here to fight the battles of the Lord. This constitutes the organization for all that is lovely and of good report against the numerous organizations for evil in a city like this : and this is what the Saviour relies on in the great work of securing for Himself those centres of influence and power. They can feel, and should feel, for the condition of those around them. They have influence and power given them for this end by the Head of the church. In Athens, Paul was probably the only man who had any just view of the guilt and danger of the multitudes that thronged the streets of that city ; the only man that had any just view of God, and any knowledge of the plan of redemption : and the only hope of rousing that vast population of idolaters rested on the voice of this solitary stranger, a man unknown and without influence, or if known, despised. It is not so here. God has placed here more than twenty thousand, all of whom, according to their professions, should have the same feelings as Paul had in Athens. They profess the same religion ; they worship the same God ; they have, or should have, the same views of the guilt and danger of man, and of the necessity to be prepared to meet God. They are each one in possession of the same knowledge of the plan of salvation, and of the same hope of heaven ; and there is not one of them, old or young, who is not, or should not be, able to tell his neighbour the way by which

he might be made everlastingly happy. Every parent can tell this to his children; and every Sabbath-school teacher to his scholars; and every man to his neighbour, to the poor, to the outcast, and to the vile. And how obvious it is, that, in the possession of this knowledge, it is their duty to seek that the whole population should be pervaded with Christian influence, or that there should be a revival of religion spreading throughout this entire community! It is as if the pestilence had come in upon the whole population, and was cutting off the inhabitants at a fearful rate every day, and God had intrusted to twenty thousand the knowledge of one infallible remedy for the disease. Who would feel himself blameless if a single one should die by his neglecting to communicate a knowledge of that remedy?

IV. My fourth observation is, that in cities and large towns Christians are exposed to peculiar temptations and dangers.

Temptations to unfaithfulness exist everywhere. The country village has its temptations, and the city has its own. Which are the greatest, it is not needful now to inquire. The only point of inquiry before us here is, What dangers beset Christians in cities and large towns? Especially what dangers in regard to direct efforts for the promotion of religion? What is there to chill and paralyse our efforts in reference to the cause of revivals?

There are many; and to show the nature of all those temptations and dangers fully, would far transcend the proper limits of a whole discourse, and can here only be glanced at. They are such as the following:—

1. The danger of being soon discouraged by the magnitude of the evils around us. They are so numerous, and they pertain to so many subjects, and they are so fortified by prevalent customs, that the spirit of Christians soon

sinks and faints within them. To rouse a city,—to promote reformation there,—to secure a general revival of religion, seems like an attempt to lade out the ocean, or like an effort to remove quicksand, where it fills in as fast as you remove it.

2. We become familiar with the evils, and cease to be appalled by their magnitude. A warm-hearted Christian on going to Paris is shocked and pained at the gaiety and licentiousness there; a Christian from the country is shocked at the amount of sin in a great city, and pained at the condition of its thoughtless thousands; a young convert, just fresh from his first view of the cross, and of the dying Saviour, and with his vivid conceptions of the worth of the soul, weeps over the condition of the tens of thousands around him, and feels, like young Melancthon, that he can persuade them all to turn to God. But how soon, as a general rule, does your stranger Christian in Paris, and he that comes to us from the country, and the young convert, lose all this ardour! These thousands we see walk the streets, almost forgetting that they have souls. The young and the accomplished we see crowd the abodes of fashion, and we seem to forget that for them Christ died, or that there can be for such gay and happy throngs any such places as a sick bed or a grave; the rich we see roll along in splendour, and cease to feel almost that there is a God before whom they must appear, and a hell where the rich man that is impenitent will lift up his eyes in torment; and soon we sleep as calmly in our beds as though all this multitude were on the way to heaven.

3. We are appalled by the fact, that evils are *combined* and *confederated*, and that it seems almost hopeless to attempt to break them up. It is not that you have to meet an army of profane men, and that when they are reformed, the field is clear and the victory gained. It is

not that you must meet a host of Sabbath-breakers, and that when they are restrained the victory is won. It is not that we must ferret out and reform some thousands of the impure and licentious, and that then the work is done. It is not that you must vanquish an army of atheists, and infidels, and scoffers; and that when you have convinced them of the truth of Christianity, the task is completed. Nor is it that you must meet with fashion, and vanity, and the love of the world, and substitute for all this the love of God. The difficulty is, that **THEY ARE ALL IN THE FIELD TOGETHER.** They are parts of one great army, the army of the foe of God; they are under the control of one master mind, the great apostate spirit, that marshals them for his war against virtue and against God; and unless *all* are driven from the field, the victory cannot be won; and seeing this, Christians soon become disheartened. Connected with this is the fact, that sins are interlocked and confederated together. They never appear alone. You cannot meet one form of evil by itself, and destroy it as if it were alone. When, for example, you make war on intemperance, it is not on intemperance alone. It is a war at the same time on avarice and covetousness, and on all the forms of traffic and of business by which it is sustained, and on all the customs and vices that walk in the train of intemperance. You make war on profaneness, and licentiousness, and Sabbath-breaking, and the theatre, and on the love of money in some of its worst forms, more than half of all which evils are connected with indulgence in intoxicating liquors. How long could a theatre be sustained if intoxicating drinks were not accessible? How few, comparatively, would be profane, if they were never excited by intoxicating drinks! And how closely connected are intemperance and licentiousness everywhere! Attack one form of sin anywhere, and you attack a host of affiliated vices, and all their friends are roused to oppose

you. Cicero long since remarked that there was "a common bond" among the virtues. They are united, a family of sisters, always strengthening each other, always found in each other's company, and always diffusing around smiles and joy. They are like a *parterre* of commingled flowers, when you breathe the fragrance emitted by them all. And so there is a common bond among vices. They are of one family, of one bad parentage. When you meet with one, you may be sure that others are not far off—not, indeed, a family harmonious and happy, like the virtues, but still united and associated. You cannot meet one without rousing up all; and hence the difficulty every where of putting down vice and promoting a reformation, and hence the friends of virtue become intimidated and appalled.

4. A fourth danger in cities is, that of conformity to the evil customs which prevail around us. I do not mean, that Christians, whom God has set in cities to carry forward His work and to save souls, fall into open sin; but I refer to what the Bible calls "conformity to the world." There is a great deal of piety in the world, in the main connected with honest intentions, that is like the chameleon, taking its hue from surrounding objects. Or I may use, perhaps, a better illustration. It is like a precious gem set in a foil. The jeweller spreads beneath it a coloured substance, and the gem partakes of that colour. It sparkles and is beautiful. It has an original beauty, but its peculiar hue is borrowed from the foreign substance in which it is embedded. Not a little of the religion of the world is like this gem. It is genuine, and in itself beautiful and valuable. But it borrows its appearance from the things around it; and when the *setting* happens to be bad, the whole brilliancy is gone, and the beauty disappears. In a high state of religious feeling in a church, or in a time of revival, that religion sparkles like the diamond. When the Christian church is

roused to seek the salvation of the world, when a pure love flows from heart to heart, when all are engaged in promoting the salvation of sinners, then it shines brilliant as a gem of the purest water. But when the church slumbers, and its zeal languishes, and iniquity abounds, then it is a precious stone badly set, and the dark foil dims all its lustre and mars all its beauty. It requires a high order of religion *not* to be conformed to the world. We are with the people of this world; we transact business with them; we converse with them; we are invited to partake with them of the pleasures in which they find their only enjoyment; we mingle with them in the social circle; we “catch the manners living as they rise,” and we suffer the world of vanity and fashion to give us laws about the style of living, and conversation, and dress, and amusement. Piety that would have shone with the brilliancy of the diamond in the persecution of Nero or of Mary, may be dull and dim while the world caresses and flatters; and zeal, that would beam like that of a seraph were the whole church alive to God, sinks away into a flickering and almost expiring flame when the church slumbers. In no place does the world have such influence over Christians,—or rather, perhaps, I ought to say, in no place is there so much danger of that influence,—as in cities. In such places eminently “iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold.”

5. Connected with this is a fifth danger, in regard to the mass of Christians. It is seen in a disposition to palliate sin, or to apologize for it, or to speak of it in language that shall not imply reproof. The nomenclature of sins, like that of chemistry, is often changed; and the characteristics of an age can often be determined by the appellations given to vice. An age of great refinement—the golden or tinsel age of society—is often characterized by great fastidiousness and great delicacy; in plainer language,

great *prudishness*. Crimes change names ; faults are apologized for under names that border on virtue ; and words which suggest the idea of *sin* or *wrong*, are exchanged for names that suggest anything but the thing referred to ; and so the gay and the Christian world together “wrap it up.” When iniquity abounds, when it goes up into places of affluence and rank, the world demands the language of gentleness and apology. “Prophecy unto us smooth things,” becomes the common wish ; and the kind of reproof and fidelity in preaching, where things are called by their right names, and where the iniquity of the heart is laid open, and men are warned with appropriate earnestness to flee from the wrath to come, is set down as fanaticism and extravagance. How difficult it is to reach some far-pervading sins in the community, sins that endanger the salvation of thousands in all our cities ! and how difficult to rouse Christians to a sense of their existence, or the dangers that attend their indulgence !

I had hoped to have had time to speak of other dangers of the members of the churches in regard to the promotion of religion in our cities, arising from the love of gain ; from the temptations to neglect secret prayer ; from the tendencies to neglect the careful study of the Bible ; from the fact that the impressions made by preaching are so soon obliterated from the mind by business and the influence of the world : and I would have spoken also of the difficulties of promoting religion, from the organized resistances, and from the want of the kind of social influences that prevail in country neighbourhoods and villages. But I have already trenched much on the time that should have been allotted to what was designed to be the leading purpose of this discourse. That remains to be considered ; and a few brief hints must now be all.

V. It is, the duties of Christians in cities in regard to

the promotion of revivals of religion. They are such as the following :—

1. To form and cherish just views about the possibility, the desirableness, and the importance of revivals of religion here. It is not too much to suppose that large numbers of professing Christians in the different churches have no definite views on these points. They have never made them a matter of distinct thought or inquiry. They have never gone to the New Testament to find out what was *done* in the time of the Saviour and the apostles, and what was said about the possibility and the value of such works of grace. Perhaps many have obtained all the views which they have ever had of such works of grace from the observation of foreign tourists, or from the tone of the worldly society around them. And it is to be feared that not a few professing Christians in all churches in cities regard, at heart, revivals of religion as of doubtful value, or as scenes of wild-fire and fanaticism. Is it uncharitable to ask how many Christians there are in any of our churches that would stand up amidst the rich and the gay, in the brilliant circles where they are sometimes found, as the firm advocates of revivals of religion, if they were attacked? Are there not many that would concede all that the sceptical or the scoffing opponent would desire to have conceded? Now it is much, it is everything, when Christians intelligently, and on settled grounds, believe in the value and existence of revivals of religion; when they have so examined the subject, so read the New Testament, and so made it a matter of prayer, as to see that, in the estimation of the Redeemer, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the world, in powerful revivals of religion, was to be the triumph of His work, and a blessing worth the self-denials and toils of His life, and His unspeakable agonies on the cross. Such a feeling in the churches is usually a precursor of such a work

of grace; and we cannot hope for such descending influences on our cities until Christians shall think as the Saviour thought, and feel as the Saviour felt. This is the great thing now needed among Christians; and that day which shall convince all, or the great body of professing Christians in cities, of the reality and desirableness of revivals of religion, will constitute a new era in the history of religion, and will precede the manifestations of the power of God like that on the day of Pentecost.

2. For the promotion of religion in places like this, Christians should be firm and settled in the principles of religion. There should be no yielding of principle, no improper compliance with the customs around us. Our views of religion should be drawn from the Bible, and not from the books which uninspired men have written, or from the views which the gay and fashionable, the rich and vain, and even the literary and scientific world may entertain of religion and its duties. Literature and science, poetry and the arts, are to be allowed no more to give us our views of religion than gaiety and fashion. From the Holy Bible—the unerring word of the living God—Christians are to derive their views of the nature of religion. There we are to go to learn what the soul is worth; what it cost to redeem it; what is its condition as it comes into the world; what is the state of man by nature; what dangers beset him; why man is placed on the earth, and for what objects Christians are to live. Fresh with the views drawn from the living fountains of truth, what estimate should we form of the multitudes around us?—what but that they are lost, ruined, dying, and that every thing should be done that can be done for their salvation? And when we have drunk deep at that living fountain, what views should we derive of the duty of Christians here? That they should be *everywhere* the firm and unwavering friends of God; the

advocates of truth and holiness; the rebukers of sin by their lips and by their lives; and the labourers in the vineyard of their Lord to save souls from death. On all the questions that divide the religious from the irreligious world, the Christian should have settled views, and should abide by them, come contempt, or cursing, or flame. There should be no vacillating; no wavering; no taking sides with the foes of the Redeemer; no yielding a point which the Redeemer would not yield. In the great questions pertaining to the new birth and the atonement; to revivals of religion and to missions; to temperance, chastity, and the Sabbath; to the spread of the Bible and to Sabbath schools; in regard to the theatre, the ball-room, and the splendid gaiety and folly, there *ought* to be singleness and uniformity of opinion and conduct among the friends of the Redeemer. It ought to be known where each friend of Christ could be found. There ought to be the same views and feeling which the Redeemer would have; the same course of life which He would advise and recommend. Is it so? So far from it, that you can hardly go into a promiscuous assemblage of professed Christians without finding on many of the most important of these points as many different views as there are different minds; and so far from it that you cannot calculate on the efficient and harmonious co-operation of any considerable portion of such a group to put down any one of these evils. So it ought not to be; so it was not in the days of apostolic decision and independence in religion.

3. It is the duty of Christians to provide means for the religious instruction of the masses of mind that are thrown together in cities, the means of bringing all under Christian influence. Just now, not very far from one half of the population in all our cities would be excluded from places of worship, should they be disposed to attend, for the

absolute want of room. Now it is in the *power* of the various denominations of Christians in this city, and in other cities, to provide ample accommodations for all the population that could attend on public worship. It is in their power to get all the wandering and neglected children into Sabbath schools. It is in their power to place a Bible in every family. It is in their power to keep up prayer-meetings, and other religious services, in every lane and alley where it would be desirable. It is in the power of Christians, aided by what they might depend on in other classes of the community favourable to morals, to close the thousands of dram-shops and low taverns that infest us. What can be done should be done; and I am saying only that which all men will admit to be well founded, when I say that all these things *should* be done in this city, and *when* done we might look for a general revival of religion.

4. It is the duty of Christians in a city, as everywhere, but principally here, to bring the influence of religion to bear on the members of their families. We look abroad, but let us also look at home. If we wish a revival of religion, it must be sought in our own hearts, in our own dwellings. Whatever there is in our hearts that grieves the Holy Spirit of God, should be removed; and what there is we may easily know. If we have forgotten our first love; if we have laid aside the simplicity of our confidence in the Lord Jesus; if we have neglected prayer; if our secret devotions are cold, formal, heartless, often intermitted; if we are seeking the world, its wealth, its pleasures, its honours; if we have become rich, and at the same time proud and self-confident; if avarice has grown as covetousness has been gratified; and if, for our families, we are seeking the world rather than heaven, it is time for us to pause, and to retrace our steps, and with penitent hearts to begin life anew. These things hinder religion;

these things prevent revivals. And whatever there is in our families that grieves the Spirit of God, should be laid aside. The God that sees all knows what that may be. If family devotion is cold and formal, or is not maintained at all; if the love of dress, and vanity, and parties of pleasure, and the gaieties of the world have seized upon the minds of our children, and if we feel that they must be indulged; these then are things that prevent religion; these the things that shut the heavenly influences from our dwellings and from the city of our habitation.

5. There should be prayer for a revival of religion; prayer distinctly and definitely for that. O, could twenty thousand Christians in this city unite in that one supplication, "O LORD, REVIVE THY WORK!" would not the ear of God be open to their cry? When shall this be? When shall the time come that we can feel that such a prayer ascends to God from the hearts of the thousands of His professed friends in a city like this? This, brethren, is what we need; the spirit of that ancient man who wrestled till the break of day, saying, "I cannot let Thee go except Thou bless me;" the spirit of that prophet of the Lord, who in the name of the Church said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." (Isaiah lxii. 1.)

Christians, God has placed you in this city to do good; to show the power of His gospel; to promote religion. What are the prospects of the immortal souls around you? Where will they soon be? Soon they and you will be together at the bar of God. You will meet when the gaieties of life shall have died away; when fashion and wealth shall have lost their glitter; when the eternal doom of the soul is to be pronounced, and when *your* chief joy then will be

found in the reflection that you have done **AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR THEIR SALVATION.**

If religion is to be revived, it is to begin at the house of God. There are the hopes of man in regard to his immortal welfare. There is not a vice in this city that might not be crippled or destroyed if every Christian had the burning zeal of Paul. Christians should drink anew of the fountain of the waters of life. Time was, in the days of the martyrs, when a female, trained in the refinements of the Roman capital, would not throw a grain of incense on a pagan altar to save her body from the flames. O come those times again ; times when all who bear the Christian name shall, with such firmness, resist all the forms of sin ! Come those times when every Christian, dead to the world, but alive unto God, shall resist sin, if need be, "even unto blood," and when he shall labour and pray unceasingly **FOR A REVIVAL OF PURE RELIGION !**

SERMON IX.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick ; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matt. v. 14–16.

THIS passage of Scripture implies that there is a difference between Christians and other men. It is a radical and permanent distinction as regards their principle of action. My object is to show that this difference will manifest itself in the life. This I shall endeavour to do by showing,

I. That this difference will be developed ; and,

II. By inquiring what there is in the circumstances of the Christian adapted to bring out his principles.

I. The first point is, that the principles of Christian piety will be in fact developed in the life. By this I mean, that he who is truly a Christian in his heart will be in his life ; that his conduct will be not merely that of a professor or a moral man, or an amiable and estimable member of his family and the community, but that he will be a religious man ; that you may know where to find him on any subject pertaining to the kingdom of Christ. Now, that this will be the case, it does not require many words to prove. For,

1. The nature of the change is such, that it cannot but develop itself. Regeneration effects no direct revolution in the intellect, but it does in the heart ; none in the essential

stamina of the mind, but it does in the principles of action, and in the volitions, desires, and preferences of the man. Nor is it a slight change. It is so great as to make it proper to apply to it the terms, "new creation," "new birth," and, "life from the dead." There is no other change in the human mind like it,—none so deep, so thorough, so abiding. This is so clear in the Bible as to need no further proof. Now, the proper place to manifest such a change is in the life; and such a change, if it exist, will be manifest there. Neither the nature of mind, nor of religion, will or can prevent it. Important revolutions in a man's principles on any subject, we expect will be exhibited there. Nor have we any evidence that they have occurred until we witness them in a man's deportment.

But the change in a man's religious views and feelings in regeneration is one that affects him not in any one department of life, but in all. It is not a revolution whose effects we expect simply in the church, or in the family, in the external conduct, or in the abandonment of vices, but in all the appropriate circumstances of the man's life. If a revolution like that exist, it will be seen. It will constitute him a new man in Christ Jesus.

2. The same thing is clear from the declaration of the text. It is not, "Ye ought to be the light of the world," but, "Ye *are*." Not that Christians *should be* like a city set on a hill, but an affirmation that they *are* such. Though exhortations are addressed to Christians in the New Testament, urging them to a life of faith, yet they are also addressed as actually putting forth the principles of piety, and as true to their God and Saviour. "Ye who were sometime darkness are light in the Lord." "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul." "I thank my God," says Paul to the Romans, "that your faith is spoken of through-

out the whole world." "None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." It is unnecessary to multiply passages. All know that the New Testament abounds in expressions declaring the matter of fact, that the Gospel has an ascendancy in the minds of its friends. Nor would it be necessary to advert to this circumstance, were it not that so many Christians are in the habit of regarding the Bible rather as filled with exhortations and commands which they are not expected to comply with, than with sober statements of what the Gospel actually does accomplish among men. The truth is, God contemplated that the Gospel should have effect; and such was in sober verity the early effect of the Gospel, that Paul could address any church as actually manifesting the mighty change wrought by the Spirit of God. "Ye are our epistle," said he to the church at Corinth,—the living standing proof at once of the power of the Gospel and of the effect of his ministry. We have fallen on different times. The language addressed to churches is not, "Ye are," but, "Ye ought to be," the consistent followers of the Lord Jesus. O when shall we be free from that miserable theology which only chills and paralyses and freezes, that false philosophy which fetters the soul, and binds the energies of the children of God, and that spirit of slumber which compels the ministry, if they would speak the truth to their people, to say, "Ye ought to be the devoted followers of Christ;" and which seals our mouth when we would say that ye are living monuments of the power and grace of God?

Let not refuge be attempted here in the plea; that the people whom Paul addressed had been heathen, and that, therefore, the change would be more manifest, and this sort of appeal would be more proper. True, they had been heathen, and the change was a proof which no infidel has met yet that the Gospel was from God. But the

ground of the address to the primitive Christians was not what they had been, so much as what they then were. Besides, is it reserved for us to meet a remark like this, that a people nursed in heathenism, but yesterday degraded to the level of the brute, and sunk in every species of abomination, were to be addressed as actually in advance in Christian principles of the people of our times, and trained from their earliest years in the great principles of Christian religion? Are we to expect more living demonstrations of the power of piety from the recovered population of Athens, Corinth, and Rome, than from the people of these times, more of its ceaseless energy and heavenly influence? or from the population of Kaffraria, and the Sandwich Islands, and Burmah, or Hindostan, than in the churches of this land? No, my Christian brethren; the Gospel contemplates it as a matter of sober fact, that we can appeal to you and to all Christians, and say "*Ye are*"—not, "*Ye ought to be*"—"the light of the world." We can address the language of obligation and of duty to the most degraded population on the globe; we can approach the profligate, and the profane, and the pagan, with the language, "*Ye ought to be humble followers of God.*" We can approach true Christians with the language of certainty, and say, "*Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world.*" Nor is any man a Christian who cannot be addressed in that language.

3. The same thing is clear if we look at the instances which are mentioned in the New Testament. In the case of Christ it is beyond the possibility of doubt. Nor is it unfair to adduce Him as a case in which the principles of religion were developed. True, He had no unholy propensity, and needed no change. But His principles were put to the test, and to a test unequalled in the life of man. On one occasion, such was the pressure of circumstances, such

His intense anxiety, and such the magnitude of the great inquiry, that He said, “‘ Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say ?’ Shall I say, ‘ Father, save Me from this hour ?’—this impending calamity—this terrific, sad, and painful death ? Shall I abandon this work, yield in the conflict, and pray to God to save Me from approaching woes ?” His own decision is well known. “ Father, glorify Thy name. Let calamity come ; let Me suffer, let Me die, but honour Thou Thy name.” Scarcely less clear was the case of the apostles. Who could doubt what were the principles of Paul ? And yet Paul at conversion might have pleaded what would be pleaded by thousands of professors, as the reason why their religious principles are obscured. It was not that he had no prospect of honour, and ease, and affluence, that he became so decided a Christian. The path to fame and wealth was open before him. O how much persecution and poverty and contempt and danger might he have avoided by a little of that regard to ease and affluence, which thousands bearing the same honoured name of Christian manifest ! How easy for him, also, to have sunk the Christian in securing the honours of office, the friendship and applause of mankind ! But Paul judged differently. So of Peter, of John, of Moses, of Daniel, of Ezra, of Elijah, of John the Baptist. See Abraham leaving the land of his fathers at the command of God ; see Moses despising the splendours of royalty ; see Daniel encompassed by danger and death ; see the martyrs, witnesses for God, while the flame enveloped the body, or their sinews were torn by the rack ; see the Son of God, always the friend of His Father, always showing what He was ; and you have an illustration of what the Christian principle is, and is intended to be.

4. There is no principle in the universe that can be brought to bear on the mind with such weight as the

religion of the Gospel. There is nothing that can develope the principles of man, if it be not the Gospel. And yet we know it is easy, by far inferior tests, to find out a man's character. Horace Walpole long since remarked that every man has his price. A man whose predominant passion is avarice, can be corrupted. A small sum may not do it, but you may multiply the temptation till his principles shall come out. Thus, it was not a trifling bribe that could move Lord Bacon. But he might be bought, and it was done. One form of pleasure, or one degree of vice, may not corrupt a man; but another will. So the natural principles of the heart may be brought out. Your father languishes on a bed of death. His dying sufferings will recall you from the place of folly or business to minister to his wants: or, in other words, the principles of filial affection will overcome those which are leading you to vice. Your country bleeds. It will test your patriotism. Its great sufferings may overcome the love of the fireside; and you may welcome the toil of the camp, and the perils of the field. The sufferings of your country have brought you out, and shown what you are. But none of these motives test the character like the religion of Christ. God, by that plan, designed to effect what no other plan could do. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be manifested in us." Law, philosophy, morals, had failed to restrain and reform men. But the Gospel has been effectual. In millions of cases, men have been changed, redeemed, purified, saved. So that it has become an established matter in God's government that the Gospel is powerful enough to overcome all the tendencies of sin. It will unclench the hands of the stoutest avarice, silence

the profaneness of the boldest blasphemer, make pure the most corrupt heart, and stay the strides of the most haughty. There is not a grasp on gold or pleasure which the Gospel has not power to break. And there is not a sinner who, if he fairly comes under its dominion, will not become a holy man. Your strongest propensities it may subdue. Your proudest system of morality it may destroy, and your most gigantic schemes of corruption it may demolish in the dust; for thousands of such sinners as you are, it has humbled, prostrated, and changed into holy men. No persecutor is secure that he can accomplish his scheme before he shall be arrested by it. The band sent to arrest the Saviour were awed, humbled, convinced by His eloquence; and returned saying, "Never man spake like this man." Paul was arrested in his mad career, despite his malice and his commission. Now can it be that this mighty Gospel that is appalled by no towering crime, that cowers before no propensities, that fears no titles, no splendour, and no renown, that prostrates haughty men as easily as does the tempest the proudest oak or cedar of Lebanon, that can enter any circle of corruption, and shed the peace of Eden around the habitation of the profane, and the scoffer, and the drunkard, that carries its principles into the profoundest minds, and sheds its humility into the proudest hearts,—is it possible that it can exist, and not be manifest? Can it do all this, and no one know it? Can it live and act thus, and never be developed? Then may the light rest on the mountain top and the vale, and no one see it. Then may the city lift its turrets to the clouds, and be invisible. Then may the winds of heaven prostrate the pride of the forest, or the habitations of men, and no one know it; and then may the ocean swell and pour its surges on the shore, and no one be aware of commotion. It must, it will, stand out

in the view of man. If it accomplishes such changes, they will be seen ; and if it ever grasps any human spirit, it must show its power in the life. We are prepared to remark,

II. That the world is fitted to develop the principles of men, and eminently those of the Christian.

The plan of God in His moral government is to test the character : nor are any rewards conferred until the character is ascertained. The whole arrangement of His moral government is such as to show what man is, and such as to make the sentence of the day of judgment be seen to be just. Men are suffered to become learned, to see whether they are disposed to employ their learning for the welfare of the universe. They are suffered to accumulate wealth, that the native propensities of the heart may be brought out. Objects of fame, of ambition, of pleasure, pass before the mind. It is not that God may know, but that a fair trial may be made. Before that trial shall be made, a sentence of condemnation would appear to be unequal. When man has been fairly tried, when virtue and vice, heaven and hell, honour and dishonour, have been fairly brought before him, it is right that God should address him, and say to him, "Bear that character with you to eternity."

Again. The organization of the world is adapted to develop the character of the hypocrite. Were true religion less decisive and less powerful, it would be more difficult to determine on the character. But religion is designed to produce a thorough change in all the man. It becomes, then, a matter comparatively easy to determine the character of those whom the Saviour describes as neither cold nor hot,—those who have a standing among the professed people of God, and yet in works deny Him. In a world like this, and in a community organized as the

Christian church is, man never need mistake his own character. It is not the fault of God, if men are deceived. So decisive is the Gospel, that it must and will produce the effect of testing the man. "He that is not with Me," said the Saviour, "is against Me." Look at any instance of a hypocrite in the church; and there will occur occasions when his character shall be fully tried, and when it shall be seen whether he is willing to surrender the world for the sake of the Gospel. Judas must find an occasion to manifest his avarice, and sunder the slender and feeble bond by which he was united professedly to the Saviour. It was done, and he fell. He had his price; and such was the paramount ascendancy of the love of gold in his heart, that for thirty pieces of silver,—a price at which religion has often been sold,—he was willing the Lord of glory should die. Achan must find an occasion in which his prevailing principle should be tested. The occasion arrived; and, for a wedge of gold and a goodly Babylonish garment, he exposed the camp of Israel to the vengeance of God. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the same principle was again to be developed; and their lives paid the forfeit of the accursed love of gold in the church.

It is not this withering passion alone that will be tested by the Gospel. It is adapted to try the hypocrite in all his subterfuges, in all his mental reservations, in all his evasions to escape the simple and decided duties of Christian piety. Every demand of truth or duty brings his character out. The doctrines of the Gospel disturb or disgust him. Those solemn and awful and yet tender truths, which go beyond the coldest moral sentiments, and which speak of the just government of God, of sovereignty, of election, of hell, of holiness and prayer, trouble him. Those expressions of pure and advanced piety, which speak of the higher joys of the Christian, and tell of communion with God, disquiet

him. Those sentiments which speak of active piety, which call on him for decided zeal in the cause of God, irritate him. Those assaults which religion makes on his corrupt feelings, those reproofs which she administers when he conforms to the world, those denunciations which thunder along his path when he lives just like other men, and is ashamed of the religion which he professes to love, provoke him. His mind is ruffled by the demands of a life of sincere and prayerful piety. And hence Job asks respecting the hypocrite, "Will he always call upon God?" The movements of piety enrage him. Efforts made to advance the religion of Christ find no response in his bosom, and meet only sour, cold, and repulsive feeling. A revival of religion is a phenomenon in which he has no interest,—which is the object of neither his solicitude nor prayer. The great movements of Christian benevolence excite no kindred emotion in his soul. Efforts or wealth in that cause are deemed by him a dead loss. He has no tears to shed over suffering and sinful man. Now, every time the Gospel is offered to such a man in any of its forms it tests the character. As if God would not suffer him to go to hell without knowing what he is, as if He would meet him at every corner, test him in all the departments of his soul, and throw Himself in the way of the sinful and wretched man, He has varied the tests of the man's character so that he cannot but know what manner of spirit he is of. By searching and uncompromising doctrines, by truths repulsive to the native heart, by demands on his piety and his prayers occurring every hour in his family, in his professional life, in his intercourse with man, in the great designs of Christian benevolence, he meets the man everywhere, and gives him an opportunity to determine whether he will serve God or Mammon. One thing is clear. Whoever goes down to woe murmuring at the justice of God, or complaining that

there was no opportunity to test the character, it will not be the man deceived in a Christian church. Whatever the pagan, or the Jew, or the Mussulman may do, it is clear that no man goes from the bosom of the church of God to the judgment of condemnation without having his character fairly brought out and fully seen in the eye of the universe. When year after year passes by, and the man still retains his place at the communion table, and *will* not be a Christian; and when he has gone through ten thousand trials, where he had an opportunity to show that he was a pious man, and did not, no blame will be by him attached to God if he dies thus, and his home be made with other hypocrites and unbelievers; and the wonder is that in these circumstances man will retain such a place in the church of God, and subject himself to all the goadings of a guilty conscience, and the irritations of truth, and the corrosions of remorse, and the consciousness of inconsistency, for the poor and paltry benefits that result from professed adhesion to the people of God. The hypocrite will go to eternity thoroughly tested; and as God manifestly intends that his condemnation shall be monumental and admonitory with a disastrous pre-eminence even in hell, so He has taken care that the case shall be fairly brought out, and that the wretched man shall have full opportunity to escape the terrific pangs of the second death.

Again: the organization of the world is such as to bring out the character of the sincere Christian; and one grand point of God's moral government was so to shape the economy of human things as to open the finest field for its display. Religion starts into life principles of action that are ultimately to have the ascendancy in the soul. It calls up dormant powers, awakes new energies, urges to conflict with the powers of darkness, and bids man grapple with invisible and most mighty foes. Let any Christian

contemplate for one moment the situation in which he is placed, and then let him ask whether this organization does not contemplate the fact that his piety will be developed. What is religion? It contemplates the subjugation of his native propensities, the overcoming of his evil passions, the purification of a corrupt heart, the discipline of a vain and wayward and rebellious mind. It demands that chastened and serious feeling should take the place of frivolity, prayer that of thoughtlessness, the love of God that of the love of fashion, and delight in the scenes of devotion the place of delight in the scenes of amusement and vanity. Can these exist and not be manifest? And is it not the very nature of godliness that it should stamp itself in the life in letters indelible and legible by all men?

See the condition of the church of God. What may be in better times,—in those brighter periods of the world to which human affairs under the Gospel are tending,—we know not; but hitherto, and even now, there is just enough of opposition among men to all that is pure and meek and humble to make it indispensable that there be a line distinctly drawn between the friends and the foes of God. Christians have been a little band,—a remnant amid the tribes of men. They, spiritually alive, move among the dead. They tread a world in possession of the enemies of God. They are the healthy among the sick,—the sane among the insane,—the sober among the gay,—the pure among the dissolute,—the living among the tombs. Their very presence is a rebuke on human pursuits; their views a reprobation of the opinions of others; their lives a living remembrance of the folly and crimes of men. Now there is not a single principle of your religion that is peculiar to it, which the men of the world do not at heart hate, and in relation to which they will not manifest their hatred in appropriate times and ways. In proof of this I need only

refer you to your own native feelings respecting the piety of the Gospel. I could point you to the opposition to the same principles in the life and death of your great Master and Redeemer. And I could point you to a thousand fires of persecution lighted up in the darkness of past generations, shedding their beams on times of profound night and on skies of thickened clouds ; fires lighting the steps of one generation to another,—to the gardens of Nero, to the valleys in Piedmont, and to the flames of Smithfield. I could point you to thousands of dungeons, dark and dismal, where holy men have drawn out their lives, illustrating the estimate in which their piety is held by the men of this world. But it is not needful. I affirm that there is opposition enough in any age to test your character, and show what you are. It may meet you in the family, and the eye of a father shall reprove you for being a Christian, or the tongue of a brother shall deride you for your serious piety. It may meet you in the circle of friends, and the voice of professed affection shall speak of you as gloomy and superstitious for your humble and conscientious regard for God. It may meet you in public and political life, and subject the soul to a daily and constant test whether there is strength of piety sufficient to avow the despised doctrines and precepts of the cross, and to make them the governing principle of the life. They “who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;” and one design of persecution is to develope the strength of the Christian principle.

There are allurements enough to try the Christian principle, and to show to the believer what he is. A corrupt and giddy world is around him, testing his character. Places of amusement open their doors. The sound of the violin, the harp, and the organ, invites you. Nay, deeper and still more damning places of guilt often are presented to the Christian. The theatre, the places of abomination

where God is derided and virtue defied and ridiculed and cursed, dare to invite even a friend of God. And all such allurements try the character ; they ascertain whether you have strength of Christian principle to resist the sin when it is presented in alluring forms, and maintain your integrity when the voice of the syren invites you. So the path of ambition is opened before a man, to see whether he will consent to sink the Christian character for the sake of office ; whether he can climb the steps of fame with Christian simplicity of character ; or whether he prefers the vale of humble piety, content with the esteem of men and the unalloyed hopes of heaven. So the business, the enterprise, the gains of commerce, are presented to the view. The splendours of wealth allure, the ports of the world are open for successful commerce, wealth glitters in the eye, and it invites you to toil and enterprise. That you should refuse to devote yourself to industry and make full proof of commercial skill will not be maintained. But who would dare to maintain that here was no signal and eminent trial of the Christian spirit ?

Again : there is enough of affliction in the world to try the Christian. Nor is there one of us who, in the course of our lives, shall not have full opportunity to show what we are in times of trial, bereavement, and woe. God designs that there the Christian principle shall triumph, that it shall be fully equal to all the pains that we may be called to endure. He varies those afflictions to bring us freely and fairly out. Now He takes away our health, to see how we will bear protracted disease ; now He removes our property, to see how we will bear the loss of an idol ; now He cuts down the child of our hopes, and tries whether we will be still and know that He is God ; and now He opens before our own view approaching death, to try whether we have confidence enough in Him to commit our departing

spirits to the guidance of His unseen hand. In all these scenes it is designed that our piety should shine forth with a benign and pure effulgence ; brightening like the beams of the morning, and burning with intenser rays, like the sun as it ascends above the clouds, or looks forth from the tempest to ride the meridian sky.

God has placed us in a world eminently adapted to call forth the peculiar principles of the Christian, and in a world, too, where, if those principles are not called forth, it is full proof that they do not exist. See a race of sufferers, a world of mourners, entire tribes of sinners. Christians, you hold in your hands that Gospel which will send peace round the globe ; that glorious Gospel of the blessed God which will enlighten all nations, alleviate every sorrow, comfort every mourner, and change the aspect of every kingdom and tribe of men. Nor can you be inactive or undecided on this subject. Every time this great question is presented to you, in whatever form it calls on you to act ; every plan of benevolence that is submitted to you, affords an opportunity to test your character, and will actually develop that character. And as if God would present to His people the highest possible inducements to devote themselves to the good of men, He has placed before them an entire world of 'sufferers and sinners, that they may make full proof of their Christian principle. As if He would excite them in the highest manner, He has foretold brighter days of the church, and assured us that times are advancing that shall correspond with the deepest desires of the people of God. And as if He would set His seal to the expression of Christian feeling in regard to the pagan world, He has followed the efforts of His people with a signal blessing. Now, it was precisely this state of things that called forth the burning ardour of Paul. Nay, more, it was the view of the deep guilt and woes of suffering men that

moved the Son of God with compassion, and led to the self-denial of His ministry, and the agonies of the garden and cross. I need not add, that if the woes and dangers of man found their way to the bosom of God's own Son, it is not to be wondered at that they should find their way also to all who are His followers. Can a man be a Christian whose bosom does not respond in this to the feelings of the Lord Jesus? If I have read the oracles of religion aright, he cannot.

Once more : every Christian is placed amid domestic scenes and circles of friendship that will bring out his character. You have a child unrenewed. That child will soon stand at the bar of God. Nay, that child shall tread the deep profound of the eternal world, and live for ever. Need we put to a Christian parent, to excite his interest, the question, whether that child shall live for ever in heaven or hell? There is a feeling in a Christian bosom that anticipates this question; and there is much in the situation of that child to bring the Christian out, and develope his character. You have a parent who has watched over your infancy and been always kind; but that parent is not a Christian. Can there be anything among mortal men so fitted to call forth deep feeling in the youthful Christian bosom, as the sight of the parent's venerable locks, and the feeling that that parent is going unrenewed to the bar of God? You are a brother, or a sister, or a friend. The leaden, slow moving ages of eternity are before your unconverted friends; and what in all the universe is better fitted than this, to call forth all the Christian within you to humble and holy effort to save those friends from the deep shades of eternal night? You are members of a Christian church. Does it slumber? Have the shades of a heavy night fallen on your eyelids? Are there hundreds who have no professed interest in all that the Redeemer has done

to save them? Are they unrenewed, unpardoned?—what is, alas! most deeply melancholy,—unconcerned and unalarmed? They go to eternity, and they appeal to the Christian to put forth all his efforts to save them from death. You live in an age when your influence in the cause of revivals and Christian benevolence may be felt around the globe. The utmost pagan tribe, the blackest, foulest cell of guilt, and filth, and woe, the darkest dungeons of depravity on pagan soils, may be reached by your benefactions. A revival of religion in any church, such as existed on the day of Pentecost, might be felt in its influence in all this land, and in every land. The development of your Christian principles, my fellow-members of the church, is what the world demands, and what the Saviour who died asks of you. If His death will not do it, there are no motives in the universe that will. There is no other blood, there are no other groans, there can be no more such dying agonies.

SERMON X.

REASONS WHY THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER SHOULD BE DEVELOPED.

“YE are the light of the world,” &c.—Matt. v. 14–16.

IN my former discourse, I endeavoured to prove that the Christian character will be developed in all cases where there is piety in the heart; that it is not merely a matter of obligation that the piety of Christians should be manifest, but it is a matter of sober truth that where it exists it will be manifest; and that the world is admirably adapted to bring out the character of man, to show what the sinner is, what the hypocrite is, and what the Christian is, and where he may be found. In the prosecution of the same subject, I wish now to furnish an answer to one single question: Why should the Christian character be made manifest, or be developed?

Our Saviour has given us the answer in the text. It is for two objects,—two objects which blend themselves together, and result in the same thing: first, that our good works may be seen; and second, that, being seen, they may lead others to embrace the same religion, and glorify God by a holy life.

I. My first argument is, that religion is of no value unless it is brought out and made manifest to the world. What is the use of light, if it be hid under a bushel? What the value of parental affection, unless it is brought out so as to benefit your children? What the use of

friendship, if your friend can never calculate on your aid in the times of necessity? What would be the value of patriotism, if your country could not depend on you in times of danger? What is the value of the skill of a physician, unless the sick can calculate on his willingness to impart aid? What is the value of rich golden ore, unless it be recovered from the earth, and turned to a circulating medium, and be made the means of comfort or benevolence?

Just so it is with religion. What is the value of a profession of religion, where there is no living, humble, devoted piety? Of just as much value as would be the expression of parental tenderness, while the parent would see his child languish with disease, and not seek relief; or sick, or in prison, and not come to him; or as would be the piteous moanings of friendship when your professed friend would see you pine in want, or incarcerated for a debt which he could easily discharge, and not lift a finger to aid you; or as would have been the professions of Washington about liberty and love of country, if he had sought repose in the shades of Mount Vernon; or of Robert Morris, had he hoarded his gold, and seen an army, famished and naked, bleed and die without aid. What is the common value of a profession of religion, where there is manifestly nothing more? What but to bring a reproach on the cause which can never be wiped away, to put an argument into the mouth of scoffers which we can never meet, to parry all the appeals which we make to the consciences of sinners, and to hang heavy weights on the chariot wheels of the great Redeemer?

That there will be concealment of principles in heaven, any diffident and retiring piety, where man can take refuge for want of decision in the plea of unostentatiousness, and where the assumption of modesty may be

pleaded in bar of the command to be seen and known as the friend of God, no man can pretend. Christ will come, says Paul, "to be admired in all them that believe;" and, "They that be wise," says Daniel, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." "And then," says the Saviour, "shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of My Father."

II. The Christian should manifest his character, because he lives for nothing else. When a man is converted to God, he is prepared that moment for heaven; that is, he has passed through the great revolution of moral feeling which will henceforward distinguish him from the wicked; and if he then dies, God will receive him to rest. It becomes, then, a most interesting question: Why does God continue his stay on the earth? Why does He ordain that he shall still be doomed to live in a world of sin, to encounter contempt, and persecution, and poverty, and temptation, and lingering disease? Were an angel of bliss arrested in heaven, and commanded to descend to our scenes of calamity, and want, and woe, to be the tenant of a human body, and the object of the ribaldry and scorn of the world, it would be a case for which he would expect that some reason could be rendered. Now, whatever might be the conjectures of such a pure spirit in regard to the low design for which he should live on the earth, they would *not* be the following. He would not conclude, first, that his business here was to become rich, and to lay his riches by in some useless deposit. God values gold too little to redeem a man, or to employ an angel, for the sole purpose of accumulating it. The shedding of the Saviour's blood, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, had some other design than to brighten the faculties of men for successful purposes of gain. He who could make the

mines of Potosi, or the gold of Ophir, or the diamonds of Golconda, as easily as He could the coarse granite, needs no such waste of means to bring accumulated property into the universe. Nor, second, would it be that he might sit down in ease, and recline on a bed of down, for the sole purpose of enjoyment. This is manifestly not the world for such repose; nor was it a part of the promises that this should be the allotment of the Christian. Enough of our race are influenced solely by a regard to wealth, and pleasure, and fame. Enough, under the influence of native feeling, tread the paths of ambition, and cross oceans and hills in pursuit of gold. Enough crowd the places of amusement, lie down in the lap of luxurious enjoyment, and walk in the ways of pride and vanity. To this number of melancholy magnitude, it is not well that there should be added the name of Christian. In this whole revolted world it is well to believe that there are some who are influenced by other motives, and live for other ends.

But if the Christian lives for none of these things, what is the object for which he is continued on earth? I answer, that it is, first, that his character may be developed, that the principles of the man may be brought out, that it may be seen and known what he is. It is to show the signal triumphs of the grace of God in overcoming the deep-laid native propensities of the man, in subduing wild and evil passions amid objects fitted to excite, in breaking his hold on the world when ten thousand allurements are around, and in unclenching the hand of avarice, smoothing the brow of care, stilling the whisperings of envy, opening the heart of selfishness, and chaining down a wayward imagination to a sober, humble view of the realities of this and the world to come. This is manifestly the design of religion as presented in the New Testament. And where this does not exist, we say that there religion has no

power ; that it makes no distinction between its professed friends and other men. The second design of our continuance here is, that the evidence of our religion may so shine as that others may be benefitted by our living. "For no man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." That this is the design of the Christian's living, is clear from the example of Christ and the apostles. They believed that the Christian life might be turned to great practical account. They gave themselves to the great enterprise of saving a dying world ; and the world felt that they did live ; and Satan's empire, through all its hosts, gave signs of woe that all was lost. The Christian now lives for this. The salvation of men excites a deep interest in his bosom. It is an object for which he will pray, and toil, and deny himself. I say not that it is an object for which he ought to feel, but it is one which he does feel. It is a part of the man, the thing by which he is known, which constitutes his individuality, and by which he will be estimated at the judgment seat of God.

III. The Christian character should be developed, because there is no reason for its concealment. The Christian, so far as he is a Christian, has nothing which he desires to hide from the notice of any being, created or uncreated. This is clear from the New Testament. "He that is ashamed of Me and of My words before men," said the Son of God, "of him shall the Son of man be ashamed before His Father and the holy angels." "And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me, cannot be My disciple." The life of Christ shows also that this was the grand principle on which He acted. He affected no disguise. He concealed no sentiments. His views of sinners He advanced with the utmost fearlessness. His judgments respecting hypocrites He proclaimed in their presence at the hazard of His life. His doctrines He advanced alike

amid the rich and the poor; at Jerusalem, and on the hills of Galilee. He felt deeply at the condition of dying sinners, and the impending calamities of Jerusalem; and the dignified and exalted Son of God was not ashamed to be seen weeping over the doom of the devoted city. How many Christians on the earth are there now who would feel themselves degraded to be seen weeping at the prospect of the impending damnation of sinners! How much persecution would He have saved by a prudent reserve, by concealing His tears, by a time-serving policy, by a studied trimming between the service of God and the world! How peaceful might have been His life in the hills of Galilee, if He had advanced no sentiments but such as fell in with the previous views of the people! So judged also the Apostle Paul. He felt for the condition of a dying world, and he was not ashamed to have his feelings known. He felt for the condition of men deceived in the church; and he was not ashamed to say, "I tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction." Nor was *he* held back, by any views of prudence and ease, from letting it be felt to the ends of the world, that he believed men to be in danger, and was resolved that they should know his feelings at any expense of time, or toil, or pain, or blood.

Now, religion affects no concealment. It has nothing to disguise. The sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, have nothing to conceal; nor has the Christian. There is not a sentiment in the Bible, nor a duty, which he wishes or is willing to conceal. There is not a doctrine, however repulsive, that he does not wish should be known, and which he is not willing, by any feasible or proper way, to make known. The whole operations of religion are above-board. We have no mysteries; and religion keeps back nothing from the Christian. It does not permit us to

doubt there is a hell, and that the wicked are descending there ; and the Christian is willing that you should know that he thinks so. Christianity frowns on your foolish pleasures, your gaiety, and fashions, and frivolity, your theatres, and places of revelry ; and the Christian is not ashamed that you should know he thinks so. Christianity regards every man as by nature the enemy of God, needing renovation, and in danger of eternal woe ; and the Christian hides not this opinion. Christianity seeks the destruction of your schemes of wickedness, the humbling of the heart of pride, the annihilation of your plans of grandeur and ambition. It seeks an entire change in the feelings, thoughts, purposes, deeds, and the destiny of the wicked ; and is willing that you should know that this is its aim.

Now, are these things which we are to conceal ? Are we to shut the great truths of our redemption from the view ? Or, what is the same thing, are we to live as though these were not true ? Are we to conceal in our bosoms that living and active principle which separates us from others, and leave the impression on them that we esteem them safe, and that we have no belief of their danger ? Are we to make all the arrangements of our living, order all the circumstances of our families, array our persons with as splendid attire, and be as gay, and giddy, and thoughtless, as though we were just like others, living for the same ends, and putting forth no effort for their salvation ? Who is it that practises concealment ? The wretch who has some plan of evil. The man who wishes to insinuate himself into your favour to obtain by fraud your gold. The infidel, the drunkard, the gambler, who is aiming at your money or your principles. The seducer, who would undermine your virtue. He who would betray your confidence, who uses oily, and smooth, and cunning flattery to ruin you ; who overlooks your faults, commends your *foibles*, praises your beauty, your skill, or your learning,

professes profound admiration of your accomplishments, to make you a prey to his selfish designs. And shall the Christian be ranked with such men? Is he a man who believes a thing in his heart, and attempts to pass off a different opinion in his life? Is he a man whose characteristic it is that he wishes to convince you that he still loves the world, that he feels no interest in the salvation of men, who strives to imitate the gay, or associate with the great rather than the pious, to cultivate the society of the rich rather than those who fear God? You have the hope of heaven. Is that a hope which you wish to conceal? You feel that you are a sinner. Are you ashamed that this feeling should be known? Are you unwilling that it should be known that you pray or fear God, or can deny yourself for the cause of benevolence? Are you undistinguished from your fellow men, except at the communion table? Then there centres all your religion. And under the plea that religion is modest and unobtrusive, that it seeks retirement, how many appear just like the men of the world; lay plans just like the men of the world; aspire to office just like the men of the world; live, feel, act, just like the men of the world; deny themselves as little, lay plans as greedily, are as much moved at losses, and as little known in places of prayer and in their closets; turn as coolly away from plans of benevolence, grasp their gold as tightly, and use their influence as reluctantly, as the men who profess to be influenced only by a regard to this world! When religion retires thus, the world may well ask, "What is its value?" Nor can we find a ready answer.

IV. The Christian should manifest his religion, for the sake of the power of his example over other men.

There is nothing in this world that has so much power over a man as the Gospel; and there is nothing that will so affect the mind of a sinner, so try him, and bring him out,

as a life of active and decided piety on the part of a Christian. But, in order that this may be seen, it is proper to advert to a singular abuse of one of the loveliest traits of the Saviour's life among His professed friends. The Saviour was modest, was retiring, was unostentatious. He sought the shades of private life, and rebuked noise and display. He frowned on open and public proclamation of our piety, our prayers, and our alms. All this is very true. But it is perfectly easy to see how a man who does nothing, and who intends to do nothing, may make a cloak of this for his indolence. The Saviour's life was retiring; so is indolence. His maxims were unostentatious; so is inactivity. His prayers were unseen; so is the neglect of prayer. He gave His life in an unostentatious way to the service of mankind; so the man who does nothing, who lives like other men, who is undecided and unknown as a Christian, so does he sink out of view, and repose in obscurity. The Saviour frowned on pride and parade and noise. So it is easy for any one to denounce ostentation; to regard deep feelings as parade, and expanded benevolence as ostentation and display. And yet it is not a strange thing, if the whole character of the Saviour should be mistaken. On pride He did frown, but not on manifested humility. On ostentation He did frown, but it was the ostentation of the Pharisee. On improper zeal in error and delusion He did frown, and so He did on those who were neither cold nor hot. On proclamation of our doings He did frown, and so He did on those who had nothing to proclaim, and who lived like other men. Now, what is the thing that the Son of God meant to reach in all this? It was a false and hypocritical exhibition of what we do not possess. It was a show of what was not deep-felt in the soul. It was that which the hypocrite always manifests; display of what he feels not; profession of that which is

not believed : and this is the same as a profession of religion at the communion table, when there is none elsewhere ; and public deference to its outward form, when the whole life is like that of other men. But, never ! no, never, in His whole ministry, did He lisp a syllable against its being seen and felt and known, where we are to be found, and against the proper and public manifestation of a life of decided piety. His whole life was just such an exhibition. "The zeal of Thine house," saith He, "hath eaten Me up ;" and His professions at the bar of Pilate, His unshrinking fidelity, even in view of death, and His last pangs on the cross, showed where He was to be found.

Here we may make another remark. It is that religion supposes something in advance of other men. The world has come up to a certain elevation, and says it will honour religion, if it will remain stationary at this level. If it will reprove few of its vices, and those of grosser forms, if it will leave undisturbed its more refined pleasures, if it will not rebuke its gaiety and fashion and pride, if it will be found at the same festive board, and suppress its peculiarities, if it will covenant that the peace of the sinner shall not be disturbed, and the great designs of God's benevolence be not pressed on the attention of men, it will speak smoothly of religion and its friends. Thus a covenant is easily made with death, and a league with hell. There is a truce in the warfare, and the world yields just as much as the church yields ; and any decided movement in behalf of perishing sinners is regarded as a breach of compact, or an invasion of right. Religion, thus peaceful and still, thus undecided and unobtrusive, is the praise of every sinner's lips. It is eminently, in his view, the religion of peace ; and it has reconciled the world unto itself. There is no emotion, no opposition, no conflict ; there is no irritation, no movement, no feeling. The world is willing that the

church should secure all the triumphs it can; for it disturbs no man's peace, disquiets no man's conscience, breaks in upon no man's vices or pleasures. It is willing even that men should become united to the church of God; for it implies no self-denial, no abandonment of pleasure, no obligation to do any thing to save man, or to benefit the world. There is peace! But there is peace like this also elsewhere. There was peace and unity and concord in the lonely valley which Ezekiel trod, which was full of bones, very many and very dry. There is peace like this in the hollow tombs, in the charnel-house of the dead; where no lip moves to reprove the living, no eye is fired with indignation at the sins of man; no one of the still and solemn people there lifts a finger, to warn the gay and the foolish that they are going to hell. There is a union there which nothing disturbs, and which is never broken, except when one and another is laid solemn and still and noiseless in the vaults of the dead; as hypocrites, still dead in sin, become attached to a slumbering church.

Now, it is not a religion or a peace like this of which I speak, when I say that Christianity has power over men, and that the Christian should let his light shine, that he may do good. I speak of that only which is in advance of other men, which is open and decided. There is no development of Christianity when you go just as far as the world will speak well of you, and then stop. "Woe," said the Saviour to His disciples, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did they to the false prophets." An ancient Grecian orator was accustomed to say, "What foolish thing have I uttered, that the people applaud me?" A Christian may well begin to fear when all are loud in his praise. The Christian minister should seek his closet, when his praise is on the lips of the *gay and foolish* and wicked, and when he has said nothing

to disturb their peace. Our account is laid in exciting feeling ; and better is any emotion, than the still prolonged slumbers of the dead ; better any note, than the everlasting and dreary silence of the tombs. So thought the Saviour. He came for the fall and rising again of many in Israel ; and for a sign that should be spoken against, that thereby the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. And He finished His work ! He was in advance of His age. He had new views, new plans, new projects, new endeavours. Never had scribe or Pharisee or priest dreamed that the peace of Judæa was to be disturbed by a religion so pure, so humble, so bold, so spiritual. Never had the great and lordly ruler supposed that one who was rich, yet for the sake of others could become poor, that He might make many rich. Never had it occurred to a Jewish teacher that any one could be bold enough to declare, or to risk his reputation on the declaration, that they who have riches should with difficulty enter into the kingdom of God ; or to represent a rich man as calling in vain in hell for a drop of water from a poor beggar, to cool his tongue. Never had they dreamed that there was to be a religion that was to move all the people, break in upon the dull monotony of the synagogue, or overthrow the tables of the money-changers in the temple ; that was to produce excitement and inquiry and alarm ; that was to lead thousands in a day to cry with deep solicitude, " Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved ? " Yet He showed what and where He was. No one mistook Him, nor was the proudest man or the richest man ever at a loss to see that Jesus Christ was actuated by some principle prodigiously in advance of other men. And His power was felt. His name was known. His words stung in the hearts of his hearers, and His preaching vibrated long in the ears of the goaded and irritated Pharisee.

So religion, if it be anything, is always in advance of the world. It has a train of measures that are to be felt; it holds up a set of doctrines that are to tell on the soul; it has no concealment; it aims at the renovation of the entire world, and it seeks to apprise you that it is on this embassy, and that it has nothing but this to do in the world. But for its designs on your pride and plans, your hearts and lives, your follies and your wealth, it might to-day take its flight to its native heavens, and leave the world to perish as it is. But it seeks that its principles may be known. And it supposes that its most humbling doctrines, its most repulsive measures, its most stern features, should be held up by Christians themselves, in advance of their fellow-men. So Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin; so Paul before Felix; so Peter sought the imperial city; and so John and James and Matthew went among the nations of the earth, not modestly to conceal, but to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ. And so there is no Christian,—there can be none,—it is one of the axioms, the elementary truths, the first principles of Christianity, that there can be none who will conceal his sentiments,—that he that is ashamed of Christ and His words before men, of Him will the Son of man be ashamed, when He comes in the clouds with the glory of His Father and the holy angels.

Now when we ask what is the proper effect of a life of decided piety, or why the Saviour supposed that letting our light shine would have such an effect on men, the answer is at hand. For, 1. It shows what men are; it shows to sinners that they differ from others; that they are neglecting their salvation, and going down to woe. An object may be totally deformed or odious, and in the darkness of midnight it will strike no one. Pour on it a flood of day, and it will be seen. A sinner will be calm

and thoughtless, so long as he supposes he is as good as others. Live so that he may be reproved by your life. Let your conduct be a rebuke of his; your benevolence a reproof of his avarice; your prayers of his thoughtlessness; your seriousness of his gaiety; and your heavenly mindedness of his sensuality; and he will feel it. 2. The life of a Christian is an argument of the truth of Christianity, which he will see and know. We may preach in this matter, and no man will feel it. The world is full of books, proving that religion is true; but who reads them? We can pile demonstration on demonstration; but they are cold abstractions, and all our demonstrations will be overturned in their practical effects by one cold and cutting remark of an infidel world. See how your Christians live; see them just as gay as I wish to be; see them as thoughtless as I desire to be; see them just as inactive as I have an inclination to be; see them as fond of the world, as greedy of gain, as ambitious, as sumptuous in their style of dress and living, as I desire to be; see them do as little for the conversion of sinners and the spread of the Gospel as I do; such a religion with all your demonstrations is worth little; and it cannot be of much moment whether I follow the inclination of my heart within or without the pale of the Christian church. But there is another side to this picture. The remarks of the infidel have not reached the Christian yet. There is an argument which infidelity must feel, and before which guilt will tremble. It is when Christianity reforms the sinner, silences the profane, reclaims the drunkard, the gay, and the worldly. The argument of such a life will be felt when our tomes of cold demonstration shall lie forgotten on our shelves. But what is this argument? It is this: that Christianity changes the man; that the change is seen in all his life. It is not that he is simply a professor

of religion,—that is no change: it is not that he is periodically religious, like the return of a quartan ague; or prudentially religious, at distant intervals; or a pious man, like the visits of angels, few and far between. It is that you know where to find him,—that he is uniform, steady, like the light of a morning unbroken by mists, or the beams of a noon-day sun unobscured by clouds and tempests. You know the power which a man has, who, in perils of field and flood,—on the cold ground, and in the cannon's mouth,—serves his country. You know how different this is from that frothy, periodical patriotism, which declaims on its beauty, and then sinks on a bed of down; which is eloquent with the praise of valour, and then is seen no more. So much difference is there between the example of him in the church who serves God, and him in the church who serves him not. 3. The world understands what religion is. They know that it is more than a name, a bugbear, or a shadow; and hence they scoff at professors, and deride our pretences of piety. Now the only way to silence the world is to do it by your life. Argument will not do it: but a life of religion will. It will do more. It will not only silence, it will subdue. It will not merely close the mouth, it will find its way to the heart. The world knows that the conduct of Christ was different from that of other men; and they understand that when professed Christians do not live like Him, they are not Christians; and they are not slow in expressing their convictions. Nor should they be; they are in the right of it there, and once at least sinners shall find me defending the correctness of their conclusions, and endeavouring to carry forward their demonstrations. 4. There is nothing so well fitted to convert men as a Christian life. God blesses such a life. He follows it with the influence of His *grace*. See a Christian self-denied. See him abandon

everything which is not Christian. See him lay aside the emblems of pride, of gaiety, of luxury. See him unambitious of honours. See him the friend of the poor, of the widow. See him live in an atmosphere of prayer, breathe forth the aspirations of devotion, turn aside from the allurements of the world. See him lay himself and all he has on the altar of God. See him the patron of those great designs that look to the conversion of all mankind. See the iron bands which fetter other men all around him, the ice of selfishness and avarice, dissolve. See his great wealth freely given; and that which calls forth all the energies of the men of this world, that for which they live, see it all yield, in his heart and life, to the influence of some mightier principle. See the Gospel in his soul have such an ascendancy that it humbles his pride, subdues his feelings, unclenches his hands from gold and office, and makes him a large and liberal benefactor of mankind. Who doubts that Howard was under the influence of some such principle? Who doubts it of Wilberforce, of Martyn, of Edwards? No man doubts it any more than I doubt that he who has never done one of these things is not a Christian. See the Gospel shed its peace in affliction, silence murmurs, restrain passion, sustain the sinking soul, and bear it up in the agonies of death. Who doubts that there is something in religion then? No man doubts it; and no man doubts that where none of these things exist, there is nothing in his religion. It is name, emptiness, vanity, position, that deceives no one, profession that no one mistakes, pretension that never beguiles, a cloak that conceals nothing, an assumption which every man understands, and which every man, and which God, despises and abhors. The Saviour understood all this, and felt more deeply than I do, or than I can express, that no good would be done unless the light of His people shone

so that others should see their good works and glorify their heavenly Father.

V. A fifth reason for this is, that God will in this way be honoured. A mere profession does not honour Him. A life of inactivity does not honour Him. The most staid and formal regularity, where there is no Christian life, does not honour Him any more than the solemn corpse of the dead laid in state is an honour to living men. The Christian honours God ; the sun does that by his light, the moon and the stars of heaven by theirs ; so does he by his light. The hills, the trees, the streams, the flowers, the ocean, honour God ; the Christian does it more than all. One word spoke them all into being ; but your piety cost the labours, the long agonies, the groans of God's only Son. One word may turn them all to nothing ; but your piety shall show forth His praise for ever and ever.

SERMON XI.

THE DUTIES WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OWE TO EACH OTHER.

“FOR as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body : so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”—1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 26.

THE subject, which from these words I propose to illustrate, is, the duties which the members of the church owe to each other.

There are duties which every society owes to itself, as there are duties which every individual owes to himself. Those duties arise from the nature and objects of the association. They are such as pertain to its own strength and respectability, to the conduct and welfare of its members, and to mutual help and counsel in relation to the purpose for which the society has been formed. A society may be of such a nature that a large part of its duties will relate to its own internal affairs ; or it may be of a kind designed to act extensively on those around it ; and yet its whole efficiency will depend on its vigilance over its own members.

Taking the church of Christ at large, there is, perhaps, nothing more remarkable than the little interest which the members have in each other. In many cases the entire vigilance over the conduct of the members devolves on a few, or, perhaps, on the pastor alone. In many instances the

amount of interest and sympathy extends only to a civil recognition ; in others there is not even the interest which secures the most distant acquaintanceship. In numerous instances those who enter a Christian church are left to struggle with difficulties and embarrassments without sympathy, where they feel no more at liberty to call on a member of the church for counsel, or aid, than they would on any other person. In many cases they struggle along with their spiritual conflicts, disheartened and discouraged, with no reason to suppose that a single member of the church sympathizes with them. In not a few instances members of the church are known to others to be living in the neglect of duty, or to be conformed apparently entirely to the world, and no one feels under obligation to administer the most gentle rebuke. In many instances, also, the members go astray, where a kind word from some one of greater age and experience would have saved them from a melancholy fall, and the church from open disgrace.

This is the more remarkable from the condition in which many are when they become members of the church. Many of them are young and quite inexperienced. Most of them have just entered on the Christian life, and religion is with them like a grain of mustard seed. Many of them are in families where there is no religion, and where they can place no reliance on their kindred to help them on to God. Many of them are thrown into circles where they are exposed to great temptations, or are engaged in kinds of business where there is every prospect that they will go astray. Add to this, that not a few of them are poor, and need assistance ; not a few are called to descend from a state of affluence, to pass through great reverses, when a sympathizing word would be to them of inestimable value ; and not a few are descending into the vale of years, who seem to

be forgotten in the prayers and sympathies of all those who are in the bloom and vigour of the Christian life.

It has become a very serious question whether it would be possible to restore that artificial thing which we call the church to the model contemplated in the New Testament. The circumstances of the world have so changed, and the church seems to sustain so many relations to the world not contemplated by the organization of the New-Testament churches, that it is a matter of grave inquiry whether it would be possible to restore that model; perhaps, with many, it would be a question whether it would be even desirable, if it could be done. It can be very readily seen, from the slightest acquaintance with the New Testament, that no church approximates the model that was contemplated by the Saviour and the apostles; and it might be made a serious question with some whether the progress of society has not suggested some valuable improvement on the original pattern; and whether it be not like some republic or democracy, that, with a very imperfect and rude constitution, answered well enough for the half-barbarous age in which it was founded; but in which such amendments to the constitution have been made, in conformity with the demands of increasing light and civilization, that a removal of those amendments, and a return to the primitive model, would be in fact a relapse into barbarism. What, for example, would any one of our churches become, if everything adventitious and foreign were removed, and it were at once placed on the model of the New Testament?

Hopeless, however, as it may seem to bring matters back where they were, it is useful from time to time to recur to these ancient records, and to ask what the church of the New Testament was in its internal organization, in its relation to the world, and in the relation of its members one to another. I propose to state some of those things.

With the New Testament before us, and throwing ourselves into apostolic times, let us inquire what the Christian church is.

I. First, it is a community separate from other communities. It has an organization of its own, and that organization is complete. It has its peculiar laws for its own internal regulation, and for the regulation of all its members in their intercourse with each other and with those that are without. It recognises no dependence on any other society for the promotion of its objects, and allows no foreign influence to come in and attempt to control it. It asks no patronage from the state, no support of the civil arm or purse, and it sues for no toleration. Its right to be in the world, and to pursue its own independent movements, is original and independent of the state, and is not a tolerated right. Though surrounded by other communities, it is independent of them all, and in a most important sense separate from them all. There is a sense which is not merely metaphorical and constructive, in which every member of that church separates himself from the world, and regards himself as no longer pertaining to it. This idea in regard to the church is found in such expressions as the following:—"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John xvii. 16.) "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John xv. 19.) "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James iv. 4.) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.) "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

(1 John v. 19.) "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) "How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 2.) "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive unto God." (Rom. vi. 11.) So the church is described not only as a community unlike that which constitutes the world, but as in an important sense separate from it, or having no fellowship with it in its peculiar aims and plans. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?.....Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 14-18.) "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Rev. xviii. 4, 5.) "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. xii. 2.)

I have selected these passages out of many more of the same kind that might be referred to, to show that the primitive idea of the church was that of a community distinct from the world, and in an important sense separate from it. In exactly what sense and to what extent it is to be separate, is not now the question before us; and there would not be time now to answer the question. The general idea is that it has its own laws and regulations, and that the world has no right to interfere with them; that it is governed by different principles, and has different aims, from all other communities; that for its own principles and

aims those of the world are never to be substituted ; that its spirit is to be unlike that of the world ; and that though its members of necessity mingle much with the world, there should be such a marked difference that there need be no difficulty in distinguishing one from the other.

II. In the second place, the church, according to the model of the New Testament, is a community characterized by mutual love among its own members. My meaning is, that love is to be the distinguishing badge, the thing by which the members of the church are to know each other and to be known ; and the thing by which eminently they are to impress the world with the belief of the reality of their religion. Other societies have pledges and badges of their own. In some it is a secret sign, known only to the initiated, but which will be understood all over the world, and will be a passport to the confidence of a brother of the same craft everywhere. In others, it is some peculiarity of speech or dress ; some catch-word, rosette, or ribbon. In others, it is some mystic sentence of a learned language, the initials of whose words only are exhibited to the world. In others, it is a written constitution, and subscription to its articles. In others, it is a common seal or banner. In others, it is the cut of a cap, or the tonsure of the hair. Now it is remarkable, that the Saviour and His apostles prescribed no such external badge of membership or office, either for the officers or members of the society which they originated. This is the more remarkable, because perhaps every society, then as now, could be known by such an outward badge. The Jew would be known everywhere by his broad phylacteries, and the borders of his garments ; and it was probably the case that the Greek who had been introduced into the Eleusinian mysteries had some outward method of expressing that fact to the world everywhere. Nothing would have been easier than for the Saviour to

have appointed some such badge for His own followers; for the great facts of His religion would have furnished striking emblems in abundance. His ministers might have been directed, when they officiated, to encircle their brows with a crown of thorns; or the figure of a cross, wrought with imperishable dye in the skin, like the mark which the Roman soldier often adopted or wore near the heart, made of gold bestudded with diamonds, would have constituted such a badge. Some peculiarity of dress, some stereotyped and inconvenient fashion, soon to be ridiculously antiquated and singular, might have characterized His members; or some gorgeous vestment, often changed, might have made known the ministers of His religion. But you will search the records of His religion in vain for even the slightest hint which justifies the adoption of any such badge of distinction. There is not the most distant intimation that either His people or His ministers are to be so distinguished; nor, to meet all that there is in the New Testament, are they required, in the slightest degree, to deviate from the decencies and proprieties of ordinary social life. No one can fail to admire the beautiful simplicity of the New Testament arrangements in this respect, or perhaps to wonder that the founder of this new society did not imitate all others, and adopt some external badge by which to distinguish its members.

But was there no badge, no mark of distinction? I answer, Yes; and one that was as beautiful, appropriate, and distinguishing as it was original. It was love. See how this is represented by the Master Himself and His apostles:—"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 34, 35.) "We know that we have passed from death unto

life, because we love the brethren." (1 John iii. 14.) "This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." (1 John iii. 23.) "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (1 John iii. 14.) "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John iv. 20.) "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." (Romans xii. 10.) "As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. iv. 9.)

Such are specimens only of the New Testament language on the subject. Who can fail to be struck with the force of the first one quoted, and which was evidently the germ out of which all that is elsewhere said in the New Testament has sprung? "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." I have said that this was as beautiful, appropriate, and distinguishing as it was original. The Pharisee was known by his external rites of religion, and the peculiarity of his dress; the military man by his cloak, his sword, or by the mark of favour which a grateful country permitted him to wear; the Essene by his squalid habiliments, and his contempt of the proprieties of life; the member of a secret society by some mystic sign or mark. In none of these cases had love for each other been the distinguishing and peculiar badge by which they were to be known. By no such badges, however, were the members of the Christian society to be known. Nor was it to be by any distinction of wealth, learning, or fame, by any peculiarity of speech, any outrage of the laws of

grammar, any customs of dress that would shock the decencies of life, or by any affected prettiness or gorgeousness in the apparel of its members or ministers. They were to be distinguished all over the world, and in all ages, by tender and constant attachment for each other. This was to surmount all distinction of country or colour, of rank, of office or sect. Here they were to feel that they were on a level, that they had common wants, had been redeemed by the same blood, were going to the same heaven, and were in every respect brethren. There was to be something about this love so original, peculiar, universal, that it would serve to distinguish Christians all over the world.

Was it possible that this could be? It would hardly seem so, if we were to judge of the church as it is now. Was it ever sufficient to constitute such a distinguishing badge? Yes, it was; and the time has been when the attachment of Christians for each other has been such as to impress the world with the reality of their religion, and with the fact that they belonged to the family of the redeemed. They were once persecuted. "See," said the heathen, "how these Christians love one another, and how ready they are to lay down their lives for each other." Is there still a lingering doubt how love could be the badge of discipleship, and could prove that they were of the same family of the redeemed? Can love then never be the indication of kindred, of relationship, of our belonging to the same community? Crowds of the young and old press on the bank of a river, and a little child falls in. Amidst the multitude on the shore is it difficult to ascertain who is the mother? A youth is led to the stake and chained, and the faggots are piled up, and tar and oil are poured on to make the flame quicker and hotter. There comes an old man, tottering and trembling, and says, "*Release that youth,*

and let me die. I am old and decrepit, and can no more benefit my family or the world. He has a sister, and a mother, and an aged sire, who are dependent on him. Let these withered limbs of mine feel the flame, but let him live. Disciples of the same Lord, I might die as well as he; and I pray that I may be permitted to lay down my life for my younger Christian brother." Would there be any doubt what flame burned still in the warm heart of that trembling old man? And if, as has been when one was doomed to die for his religion, crowds pressed forward and asked that they might die; if, as has been in such scenes, the young, the beautiful, the accomplished, those nursed in the lap of ease and affluence, pressed forward and asked that they might die to save a Christian friend, would there be any doubt that love *might* be a badge of religion? You will say, perhaps, that it is not so now. I answer, for anything that you can tell, if persecutions were to arise, these scenes might be acted over again. But *if* there is not religion enough in the church to do this, I answer, further, that in this discourse my aim is not to describe the church as it is, but as the New Testament model represents it.

III. In the third place, the church, as represented in the New Testament, is a community characterized by peculiar sympathy for those of its own members who suffer. The members of the church are, indeed, expected and required to have sympathy for all who are afflicted; but the idea is that it is their duty in a peculiar manner to sympathize with each other, and that what affects one should affect all. It is supposed that Christians will be exposed to the same kind of afflictions as others, and that they will also have many sources of sorrow peculiar to themselves. They are liable to sickness, and bereavement, and poverty, like others; they are exposed to persecutions and trials on *account* of their religion, and they have internal conflicts.

and struggles unknown to other men. They have also peculiar joys as they have peculiar sorrows, and alike in the one and the other it is supposed that they will find cordial sympathy among their brethren. It is supposed that they are one body, and that in whatever part of that body there is joy or sorrow, the whole will sympathize with it.

This idea occurs so often in the New Testament, that it cannot be expected that I should adduce all the passages which refer to it. A few must suffice. My text, in the connexion in which it stands, is one of the most prominent of these passages. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." The application of this to the human body is obvious. Such is the frame,—so delicately constituted is it,—such is the formation of the nervous fibres and the tissues, that pain in one part affects the whole frame, that joy in one part diffuses itself over all. A pain in the heart, the side, or in one of the limbs, does not confine itself there, leaving the rest of the body in a state fitted for its usual employments; but every part sympathizes with that which is affected. And so the pleasures which we receive from beauty, as seen by the eye, or from the melody and harmony of numbers, as perceived by the ear, is diffused over the whole frame, and we are filled with enjoyment. The same is supposed to be the effect in the church of Christ. What affects one member affects all. What gives pain to one gives pain to all. What honours one honours all; and as injury done to a nerve in the body, though so small as to be scarcely traceable to an unpractised eye, may be felt at the remotest extremities, and on the most important functions of life, so it is in the body of Christ. The dishonour done to the obscurest member

should be felt by all, the honour done to that member should produce rejoicing. No member of the church should be regarded as so obscure or worthless that his happiness or sorrow should excite no sympathy among his brethren, as you can make no part of the frame so obscure as to be lost on the sympathies of the whole. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

We have the same idea presented, substantially, in the following passages :—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another." (Rom. xii. 15, 16.) "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." (Heb. xiii. 3.) "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me." (Rom. xv. 1-3.) A church founded on this model would be a community where every member would regard every other one as a brother; where he would rejoice to hear of his welfare, and would sympathize in his griefs; where he would feel pleasure in any honour conferred on any other member, and would be ready to aid him in his sorrows. Without any officious intermeddling with the private concerns of individuals, there would be such an interest felt in the common welfare of the whole, that each one might be certain that he might depend on the sympathy of his brethren at all times, and in all circumstances.

Without attempting further to illustrate this point in general, let me for a moment refer to one aspect of the *church* to which it is always applicable, and in which the

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duty referred to may be discharged. I allude to the condition of the youthful members of the church, and the claims which they have on the kindness and sympathy of their older brethren. It now happens, and under the influence of Sabbath school instruction will happen more and more, that a large proportion of those who become members of the church, enter it at quite an early period of life.

It is unnecessary to speak particularly of their condition then. They are inexperienced alike in the world and in religion. They have hearts susceptible to all impressions, good and bad. They are surrounded by evil influences from without; and there are many who would rejoice in any false step which they might make, and any dishonour which they might bring on the cause which they have espoused. They have professedly left the world, and they can no longer look to it for its sympathy. They need instruction, they need counsel in perplexity, they need the strengthening influence of the prayers of the church, they need the watchful eye of those who love Zion, they need a kind word in their difficulties, they need an affectionate voice of admonition, if they go astray. Perhaps they need aid in their business; and, not only that they may prosper in that business, but that they may honour religion in it, they need the counsel of those who have experience. What their circumstances require is, not only that they may feel free to seek the spiritual advice of their pastor, but that they may seek counsel on all subjects from their Christian brethren. No man knows what service he may be rendering to the cause of religion, by a word of affectionate encouragement and counsel to a young member of the church. He who takes a Christian youth by the hand, and saves him from temptation, or encourages him to open his heart freely to him, or helps him in his efforts to get

into some useful employment, or assists him in obtaining an education for the ministry, may be doing the most important service to religion which he can ever render ; for he does that which shall be telling on the welfare of Zion long after he shall have gone to rest.

IV. In the fourth place, the church, according to the model in the New Testament, is a community in which its members accommodate themselves and their conduct, so far as can be done with a good conscience, to the views and scruples of their brethren. It is a community in which it is the duty of its members not to give needless offence to their brethren ; not to do that, unless conscience requires it, which others regard as wrong ; and to be ready to sacrifice what they may regard as harmless indulgence, if it should be the occasion of leading others into sin. This important principle, it is my business now to show, was laid down by those who had authority to give laws to the church, and was cheerfully practised by themselves. Having shown this, the question will arise, in what circumstances the application of the principle is demanded now.

We are naturally reminded of the conduct of the Saviour, as stated in a passage already referred to. "For even Christ pleased not Himself." (Rom. xv. 3 ; comp. John vi. 38.) It was not His object to gratify Himself, nor did He ever do any thing which would lead the most ignorant of His followers into sin. He indulged in nothing that could give offence to any who were most anxious to lead lives of deadness to the world, and evinced throughout a readiness to deny Himself of any personal gratification which could be indulged in only at the hazard of the souls of men. And so it is said of all Christians : "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." (Rom. xiv. 7.)

But was it the idea that from respect to the opinions

and feelings of others it was proper to give up what would otherwise be regarded as innocent and harmless? Was it ever the idea that the conduct of a member of the church was to be influenced by the views of his brethren, so as to lead him to sacrifice what he would himself regard as harmless and proper? And ought a reference to the feelings, the views, and the weaknesses of our brethren, to be allowed to regulate our own conduct in anything that is not a matter of conscience? We have a very striking case in answer to this question in the conduct of the Apostle Paul. The question arose in the primitive church, whether it was lawful for a Christian to eat the flesh offered in sacrifice to idols. It was urged, on the one hand, that if this were done, it would seem to lend a sanction to idolatry, and would lead the feebler members of the church, who were not accustomed to nice discrimination in reasoning, into sin. On the other hand, it was alleged that the eating of flesh that was exposed for sale was not unlawful, and that the purpose for which it was offered could not affect the question whether it was lawful to partake of it. Paul was clearly (1 Cor. viii.) of the latter opinion, and yet the former consideration decided him in regard to his own practice. The eating of meat could not be with him a matter of conscience; and if his doing it were the occasion of leading one into sin, he was willing to forego the indulgence. Hence he so firmly says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1 Cor. viii. 13.)

A question of similar character, and perhaps in the same connexion, came up in regard to the use of wine; and the apostle stated a similar principle, that, whatever might be his own convictions as to the absolute lawfulness of the practice, it could not be right if it were the occasion of leading others to sin. "It is good neither to eat flesh,

nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." (Rom. xiv. 21.) His own general rule in all such matters he has elsewhere stated. "I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." (1 Cor. ix. 19-23.)

The general principle, as an illustration of what the Christian church is to be, is here plain. It is this. There are some things which are right or wrong in themselves. They depend on the positive enactments of God, and on the eternal distinctions of things, and cannot be compromised, modified, or disregarded. There are other things, however, which may be regarded as matters of personal comfort, convenience, or gratification. They are clearly right in themselves; but they may be so connected, or there may be such associations in regard to them, or others may entertain such views of them, that indulgence in them by us will be an injury to others. It may shock or pain them, as if we were doing wrong; or, acting on our example, they may be led further than we would go, and fall into sin; or they may be led by our example to do that which they *now* regard as sin, and which would be sin to them. In such a case the course which we are to pursue becomes clear, and it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby a brother is offended or is made weak.

This was the principle on which the Christian church *was* evidently founded, and on which the Apostle Paul

acted. It may be observed here, that it is a principle for which there will always be occasion in the church. The particular questions in connexion with which it was stated may not occur ; but questions precisely similar are occurring in every age, and under the numerous phases in which society appears. There are certain things which are absolutely right and always right, and from the obligation to do which no modification of society or custom can absolve us ; and there are certain things which are absolutely wrong and always wrong, and which no modification of society can make right. And there are certain things, always quite numerous, where the consciences of some are entirely clear as to their lawfulness, and of others much in doubt, or where the tendency of indulgence would be to lead others into sin. In such cases what is Christian duty ? What would Paul do ?

We will take two cases ; one of which Paul has himself referred to, the other not.

The one is the use of wine. You regard it as lawful. You think the Scriptures do not condemn its use, and refer to the example of the Saviour in justification of its use. But many of your Christian brethren have strong doubts on the subject, no matter whether well founded or not. What is more to the purpose, perhaps, is, that many of them might not be as safe in the use of it as you would be. They are younger, they are liable to be invited to places where you would not be, and there is a moral certainty that, sustained by your example, they will be led to excessive indulgence, and may bring reproach on the religion which you and they profess to love. In such cases what would Paul do ? Would it be found on his own table ? would his conduct be such that it could be construed in favour of that which had led others astray ? We know what his conduct would be. "It is good not to drink

wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

The other case you have probably anticipated. It is that of dancing. You think it not wrong, though the arguments on which a Christian justifies it have not yet been submitted to the public. You would refer in this instance to neither the example of the Saviour or His apostles, nor to any recorded experience of theirs as to its lawfulness for a Christian. But there are, we will suppose, views which make you think that it is not inconsistent with the proper spirit of a Christian and the precepts of the New Testament. Meantime there are very different views among your brethren. They have no doubt about it, and they do not hesitate to express their conviction, that it is inconsistent with the general spirit of the New Testament and with the proper example of a Christian. Some of these may be among the "weaker" members of the church, but not all. There are found the great mass of the most devoted and useful ministers of the Gospel in all denominations, and many, very many, of the most spiritual and exemplary members of the churches. I may make an appeal to you yourself on this subject just here, which I mean shall convey no invidious idea, and excite no invidious comparison. It is whether, as far as your own observation has extended, you do not yourselves believe that the most consistent and devoted members of the church—they who have the most enjoyment in religion—regard it as improper for Christians. If you find a very devoted and eminent Christian, do you or do you not expect to find him in the ball-room, and do you expect that he will regard this species of amusement as that which is proper for a Christian? But still more to the purpose. This practice which you regard as proper, and which for supposition only we will regard as safe for you, will not be as safe for all. There are the young,

the inexperienced, the "weak" in the church. There are those of little education, of ill-balanced minds, of the imperfectly subdued love of the world. There are those who are surrounded with more temptations than you are; and there is a moral certainty, that, sustained by your example, they will be led into sin. In such circumstances what would Paul do? Am I wrong in inferring from the principles which he has laid down that he would not enter a ball-room while the world stands? If I am wrong, will you tell me exactly where there is a link wanting in the chain of reasoning by which I am conducted to this conclusion?

V. In the fifth place, the church is a community in which it is contemplated that there shall be mutual admonition among the members if they go astray. I will not now tax your patience by illustrating this point at length, though it is a point which I had designed to make somewhat prominent. Yet it was an elementary idea in the early conception of the Christian church. Look at the fundamental principle laid down by the Saviour. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." (Matt. xviii. 15.) "Thy brother," that is clearly a fellow member of the church. You are not to blazon it abroad, you are not to allow the suspicion that he has done you wrong to lie and rankle and fester in your own mind. You are not to allow it to make you cold, and distant, and evasive, and repulsive, when you meet him, without his knowing the cause; you are not to whisper your suspicions to this one, and that one, with the hope that they will hint to your brother that he has offended you; you are not to send him an anonymous letter, or a message by any one; you are to go to him and see him by himself, and give him an opportunity of explanation or confession. If he hears you, you have gained him; and if he repents, you

are to forgive him, even till "seventy times seven;" and to no one else are you to say anything about it. (Matt. xviii. 22.) "If thy brother trespass against thee," said the Saviour, "rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." (Luke xvii. 8.) And so said the old Mosaic statute. "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." (Lev. xix. 17.)

But I may not dwell on this duty, though its illustration might be easily made to occupy the time of a whole discourse. I will just say that the church is not now in this respect what it was contemplated it should be. Almost the whole of the painful duty—for it is a painful duty—for rebuking an erring brother is supposed to devolve on the pastor; and there are many who would not receive a rebuke from any other, even if they would from him. Nothing is more common than for members of the church to see other members going astray, or leading what they regard as inconsistent lives, without feeling the slightest obligation on themselves to rebuke them, or attempt to reclaim them. It would be said by these that the customs of society, and the different ranks and circles of life, and the fact that the offenders are rich, and that they are themselves poor, make it impossible and improper for them to attempt to administer a word of kind admonition. And this illustrates just the point before me, that the church is not now what it was in the time of the Saviour, and what it was contemplated it should be. It is an artificial thing, in which a thousand rules and institutions have come in to displace those of the New Testament, and to make it at large almost essentially unlike the "platform of a church there laid down."

Yet I cannot forbear, in conclusion, to advert in one word to the beautiful conception, the *beau idéal* of the church, as organized in the New Testament. It is a society

essentially unlike that of the world, organized on pure and holy principles, and intended to be governed by peculiar laws. It contemplates that its members shall perform with honesty, fidelity, and purity, all the relative duties which they owe to their kindred, their neighbours, their country, but on principles, not of policy, expediency, or worldly morality, but found in its own code of laws. It is a community whose badge and characteristic is love for its own members; a peculiar love, founded on their common redemption and hope of heaven, and their attachment to a common Saviour, and which knows no distinction of colour, caste, age, or country; a love so strong and pure that it is to be seen by the world to be a new element in human conduct, the development of a new law. It is a community where there is sympathy, deep and sincere, for its suffering members; and where, as in the human body, joy or sorrow in one part thrills along the whole frame. It is a community requiring of us mutual kindness, concession, and forbearance; a careful solicitude not to offend, and not to lead others into sin; a willingness to forego our own comforts and indulgences, if we may help others who are feeble and weak on to heaven. It is a community, all of whose members are liable to go astray, but in which each member feels an interest in the welfare of every other, and, whenever he wanders, would by prayer and supplication and appropriate personal effort seek to lead him back to the paths of pure religion. Such were some of the features of the New Testament church. Had this always been its character, long since its glory would have enlightened all lands, and the earth would have been filled with the knowledge of salvation.

SERMON XII.

THE VALUE OF THE SABBATH TO YOUNG MEN.

“THE Sabbath was made for man.”—Mark ii. 27.

THAT is, it was made for man as such,—whatever his age, rank, country, complexion. It was made for the old man : at the close of a life of care and toil, he may review the journey over which he travelled, that he may recall his errors and sins, and seek forgiveness, preparatory to his departure to another world ; and that by calm contemplation and prayer, on a day designed to be so much an image of heaven, he may be fitted to enter into the world of which it is the emblem. It was made for the man in middle life, —burdened and harassed with cares, endeavouring to support his family and to make provision for himself and them when he is old, sustaining the various offices of the state, or laboriously occupying the departments of instruction, engaged in incessant professional duties, or exhausting his physical powers in the workshop, or on the farm ; that he may unburden himself for a time of his weary load ; that he may counteract the tide of worldly influences that set in upon the soul, and put back the intrusions of selfishness, of avarice, of ambition ; that he may cultivate the warm affections of the heart ; and that by temporary rest he may gather strength to meet anew the temptations, and bear the toils, of life. It was made for the young man, as he enters on his untried journey, that he may prepare himself *for the career* which he proposes to pursue. It is to this

latter aspect of the design for which the Sabbath was made, that I have been requested to ask your attention, by showing the importance of the Christian Sabbath to young men.

It was of Telemachus then a young man, that Pisistratus, when approaching him as a stranger, said, in a passage which Melancthon declared to be the most beautiful in Homer, "All men stand in need of the gods."* Every young man, in a much higher sense than is supposed by most when they enter on life, will have need of the aid of his Maker, will be in circumstances where his own wisdom will not avail him, where his own strength will be weakness, where his skilful counsellors and advisers seem all to have departed, and where he will feel that none but God can furnish him with the protection and guidance which he needs. The Sabbath refers to our relations to God; but it is an appointment which was not revealed to the mind of the heathen sage, as adapted to secure for a young man the needed aid from on high.

There is no more interesting object of contemplation than a young man when he is about entering on life. Those of us who have passed through that season have a melancholy pleasure in looking back to it in our own lives, and in comparing our hopes and prospects as we looked out on the world with what we have found to be the reality; and we cannot but feel that we have a sort of right to come and tell those who are just beginning the world how we felt, what plans we formed, what mistakes we made, how those mistakes might have been avoided, and what we have found the world to be. A young man just entering on life embarks on an unknown and a perilous voyage. If the interest of the fact itself will not suffer by the comparison, his condition may be likened to that of a ship that has never yet tried the waves and

* "Odyssey," iii., 48.

storms, as it first leaves the port. This world, so full of beautiful things, furnishes few objects so lovely as such a vessel, when, with her sails all spread, and with a propitious breeze, she sails out of the harbour. But who can tell what the vessel is to encounter, into what unknown seas she may yet be drifted, between what masses of ice she may be crushed, on what hidden rocks she may impinge, what storms may whistle through her shrouds, and carry away her tall masts, or on what coast her broken timbers may be strewed? Now, as the waves gently tap her sides, nothing can be more beautiful or more safe; but storms arise on that ocean which now looks so calm, and in those storms her beautifully modelled form, her timbers framed together to defy the tempest, her ropes and her canvass, will avail nothing; and if she is saved, none but He can do it, who rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

A young man enters on the perilous voyage of life. We come to recommend the Sabbath to him, as adapted to be a means of security in that dangerous way. When it is asked, as it naturally will be, what benefit he may derive from it, the thoughts are turned to these inquiries: What the Sabbath is; What there is in the condition and prospects of a young man to which such an institution may be adapted; and, How its observance will contribute to the promotion of these objects.

The Sabbath presents itself to a young man, as it does to all others, in two aspects: as a day of rest from worldly toil and care, and a day of leisure, to be employed in higher and nobler pursuits.

Its primary aspect is that of a day of rest from worldly toil. It meets man as a season in which the cares of life are to be suspended. The plough is to be left standing in the furrow; the store is to be closed; the sound of the *hammer* and the mill is to be hushed; the loom is to

stand still ; the voice of worldly amusements is to die away ; the marts of commerce, thronged on other days, are to be vacated ; the judge is to descend from the bench ; the noise of debate in the halls of legislation is to cease ; the lawyer is to lay aside his brief ; the wayfaring man is to pause in his journey ; and the streets of the usually crowded capital, and of the busy village, are to unite in solemn stillness with the remote hamlet, and with the lonely cottage, standing far from the busy haunts of men, in a suspension from the toils and agitations which pertain to this world. The elementary notion is that of rest from worldly toils and cares,—rest for the body, rest for the wearied mind. If the body has been worn down with fatigue through other days, by travelling, or by hard labour at the plough or the forge ; if the intellect has been exhausted by distracting mercantile pursuits, or by conflicts at the bar, or by stern application in the pursuits of science ; if the passions have been lashed into excitement amidst the storms of political strife ; if the affections of the heart have been jarred and dislocated in the jostlings and conflicts of the world ; if the memory has been taxed by severe mental effort, or the imagination in an

“adventurous song,
That with no middle flight presumes to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme ;”

—the Sabbath is designed to furnish for each and all of these a season for repose. It is presumed that it is equally needful for a Cincinnatus at his plough, and Washington at Mount Vernon ; for Milton taxing the powers of the mind to the utmost in producing that which may live to after times, and which the world will not willingly let die ; for Locke in investigating with profound application the laws of the mind ; for Newton in determining the laws by

which the worlds are moved; for Howard in the continued intensity of zeal on an elevation which would have been passion in other men; for Pym and Hampden in the stormy scenes of debate, when toiling to lay the foundations and to determine the conditions of civil liberty. Wherever mind and body are taxed and exhausted by toil,—and it is meant in the laws of our being that they shall everywhere be employed,—there the Sabbath is designed to come as a day of rest. The ship, indeed, will glide along at sea, for its course cannot be arrested; and the Sabbath of the mariner may often be different from that of a dweller in a palace or a cottage, and different from that which the seaman feels that he needs. The sun and the stars will hold on their way, and the grass will grow, and the flower open its petals to the light, and the streams will roll to the ocean; for there is need that the laws of nature should be uniform, and the fibres of plants, and suns, and planets, and streams experience no exhaustion, and He who directs them all “fainteth not, nor is weary:” but man is weary and needs rest.

The other aspect in which the Sabbath meets man is that of a day to be devoted to other than worldly pursuits. He who made us would have as little consulted the laws of our being by appointing a day for mere indolence and inaction, as He would had He designed no day of rest. We have other interests than those which are connected with mere labour, whether of body or mind. We sustain other relations than those which pertain to “business,” to “gold,” to “honour,” to pleasure. We have not only a body, but a soul; not only an intellect, but a heart; not only an imagination, but a conscience. We are not merely working animals, but are intelligent and accountable moral agents; we live not only here, but we are to live hereafter. We are not only ploughmen, machinists, merchants, *lawyers*, physicians, ministers of religion, professors, and

teachers, but we are sons, brothers, husbands, fathers ; we are not only men with understanding, but men with sympathies and affections, in a world too where there is the amplest room for the play of all our faculties. Our Maker has formed no susceptibility of the soul which He has not designed should be developed, and for whose development in just proportions He has not made ample arrangements. The bodily powers, the muscles, the organs of sense, the whole frame, the intellect, the memory, the imagination, the social affections, the sympathetic powers, He designs should be fully developed. He would not have the one stinted that the other may expand to a monstrous growth : He would not have us mere intellectual beings, cultivating the mind for purposes of cunning and self-glory, like Iago ; or mere working animals, or cold calculating lovers of gold, like Shylock ; or mere creatures of the imagination, formed under the sole influence of poetry and novels, or mere weepers, or living only to enjoy mirth, and to laugh at the follies of mankind, as is fabled of Democritus. There is not a faculty of our nature pertaining to body or mind, demonstrative or imaginative, individual or social, binding us to home and kindred, or to the world at large, uniting us to this world or to the next, or to distant worlds,—nay, exciting an interest in our minds in the flower, the running stream, or the meanest creature that creeps or flies,—which it is not designed that we should cultivate, if we would secure the perfection of our being. Man, with these relations, and these high powers to cultivate, the Sabbath meets as a day of leisure, that he may show on such a day of rest that he is distinguished from beasts of burden, and creatures governed by instinct, and those incapable of moral feeling, and those destined to no higher being, and those not knowing how to aspire to fellowship with God. The bird, indeed, will build its nest on the Sabbath, and the beaver its dam, and the bee its

cell, and the lion will hunt its prey ; for they have no higher nature than is indicated by these things. But man has a higher nature than the fowls of the air and the beasts of the forest, and the world would have been sadly disjointed and incomplete, if there had been no arrangements to develop it. The Sabbath is among those arrangements.

It is, indeed, a simple thing merely to command a man to rest one day in seven ; but most of the great results which we see depend on very simple arrangements. The law which controls the falling pebble is a simple law ; but all these worlds are kept by it in their places. The law which you see developed in a prism, bending the different rays in a beam of light, is a simple law ; but all the beauty of the green lawn, of variegated flowers, of the clouds at evening, of the lips, the cheek, the eye, and all that we admire on the canvass when the pencil of Rubens or Raphael touches it, is to be traced to these simple laws. It is one of the ways in which nature works to bring out most wonderful results from the operation of the simplest laws.

We are prepared now to inquire what there is in the condition and prospects of a young man peculiarly to which such an institution may be adapted. The question is, whether there is anything in the Sabbath of which one who is in the circumstance of a young man may avail himself to check any tendency to evil, or to strengthen any of the principles of which it will be desirable to avail himself in the prosecution of his purposes of life.

A young man, like all other men, indeed, may be contemplated in two aspects,—as an individual, and as sustaining important relations. Though he has this in common, however, with all other men, yet there is a degree of importance to be attached to him in his relations to others which exists nowhere else ; for soon all that is valuable in *society* is to pass into his hands. An aged man may, as

an individual, be eminently good or evil ; but his character is constantly losing its importance in reference to the world. So far as the *relations* of life are concerned, he is constantly, either voluntarily or involuntarily, detaching himself from all around him, and becoming an isolated being. He retires from the bar, the pulpit, the senate-chamber, the exchange ; he withdraws from business, and makes preparation to pass his houses and lands into the hands of others. He has no powers now to be cultivated, in which the world takes any interest. He has no passions to be restrained, from whose development the world would have anything to dread. He can form no plan stretching into future years on which the world would look with either hope or fear. He will, indeed, be respected if he is virtuous ; but he will not be feared if he is wicked ; and, whether the one or the other, the weapon with which he strikes in favour of virtue or vice will be like that in the hand of the aged Priam :—

“*Telum imbellè sine ictu.*”

We may love him as a father, venerate him as a sage, honour him for his past services, or pity him on account of his infirmities ; but we cease to rely on his arm in defence of his country, or his eloquent voice in favour of a righteous cause, and we cease to dread him as a foe.

Not so, however, with the young man. Everything is passing into his hands. The key of every warehouse, of every bank, and of every insurance office ; every pulpit, every bench of justice, and every professor's chair ; every deed and every bond and mortgage ; all the endowments of colleges and asylums ; our libraries, our dwellings, our farms, our gardens ; all the offices of the township and of the nation ; all the enterprises of national improvements and all the plans of benevolence, fruits of many prayers and of thoughtful wisdom,—all these things are soon to be com-

mitted to young men. In every pulsation of the heart of a young man, therefore, in every plan that he forms, in the development of every failing and purpose, the community has the deepest interest; and when the eye is dim with age, and the frame is weak and palsied, if there is anything that will kindle up the eye with momentary brilliancy or inspirit that frame, it is the expanding virtue of a son, and the feeling that the coming generation will not be unworthy to receive a trust so dear to a departing Christian and patriot. So the aged patriarch Jacob, when he was borne down under a weight of years, and he felt that he was about to die, assembled his sons around him, and, animated by the prospect before them, his departing soul was stirred within him. He pronounced his last benediction in language of the loftiest prophetic inspiration, committed to them the great interests of truth and of religion, and, having made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered peacefully to his people. (Gen. xlix.)

Let us then ask more distinctly what there is in a young man considered as an individual, and in reference to these relations, which furnishes ground for this solicitude, and on which an institution like the Sabbath may be supposed to have a happy influence.

In the bearing of the Sabbath on the character and prospects of a young man, we may contemplate him in three aspects:—as demanding periodical rest; as exposed to influences which it would be desirable to check and control by some such institution; and as designed to be a religious being.

I. First, as demanding periodical seasons of rest. I mean, that he comes under the general law of our being, though in the full vigour of his youthful powers, by which

rest at certain seasons is demanded. The law of nature on his subject is not one which is applicable only to enfeebled age, but has respect to man in his highest figure of body and mind.

I lay down then the general principle, that such are the laws of our nature in respect to all the efforts which we can put forth, that rest, honest rest, is demanded after exertion; that a continued and unremitted employment of our powers is in many cases impossible, and in all injurious; and that by allowing the periodical rest which nature demands, man will accomplish more than he will by continuous and unintermitted effort.

This is true, as we all know, of the muscular system, voluntary and involuntary. In breathing, in winking of the eyes, in the beating of the heart, there is a system of alternate action and repose, each brief indeed in their existence, but indispensable to the healthy action of the muscles, and to the continuance of life. Each one of these organs, too, though they seem to be constantly in motion, will have the rest which nature demands, or disease and death will be the result. The same is true of our voluntary muscles. He that should endeavour to labour at the same thing constantly, he that should attempt to run or walk without relaxation, he that should exercise the same class of muscles in writing, in the practice of music, in climbing, or in holding the limb in a fixed position, would soon be sensible that he was violating a law of nature, and would be compelled by a fearful penalty to pay the forfeit. Nay, in doing these very things, in running, or leaping, or climbing, or in the most rapid execution of a piece of music, nature has provided by antagonist muscles that the great law demanding repose shall not be disregarded. A long-continued and unintermitted tension of any one of the muscles of the frame would soon bring us into conflict with one of the

universal laws of our being ; and we should be reminded of the existence of those laws in such a way that we should feel that they must be observed.

Yet the operation of this law of our nature is not enough. We need other modes of rest than those which can be obtained by the intermitted action of a muscle which is soon to be resumed. We need longer repose ; we need an entire relaxation of the system ; we need such a condition that every muscle and nerve shall be laid down, shall be relaxed, shall be composed to rest, and shall be left in an undisturbed position for hours together, where there shall be no danger of its being summoned into action. Nature has provided for this too, and this law must be obeyed : for a few hours only can we be employed on our farms, or in our merchandise, and then the sun refuses us light any longer, and night spreads her sable curtains over all things, and the affairs of a busy world come to a pause. Darkness broods on the path of man, comes into his counting house and his dwelling, meets him in his travels, interrupts his busiest employments, wraps the world in silence ; and he himself sympathizes with the universal stillness of nature, and sinks down into a state of unconsciousness. The heart continues, indeed, still to beat, but more gently than under the excitements of political strife, of avarice and revenge ; the lungs heave, though more gently than in the hurry and excitement of the chase, or in the anxious effort for gold. But the eyelid heavy will not suffer the eye to look out on the world, and even its involuntary action entirely ceases, and it sinks to repose. The ear, as if tired of hearing so many jarring and discordant sounds, hears nothing ; the eye, as if wearied with seeing, sees nothing ; the agitated bosom is as calm as it was in the slumberings of infancy ; the stretched and weary muscle is relaxed, the nerve is released from its office of conveying the intimations

of the will to the distant members of the exhausted frame. The storm may howl without, or the ocean roll high its billows, or perhaps even the thunder of battle may be near, but nature will have repose. Napoleon, at Leipsic, exhausted by fatigue, reposed at the foot of a tree even when the destiny of his empire depended on the issue of the battle; and not even the roaring storm at sea can prevent compliance with this necessary law. Sleep

“upon the high and giddy mast
Seals up the ship-boy's eyes, and rocks his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deaf'ning clamours in the slippery shrouds,
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes.”

To the weary man

“Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep!
—— his ready visit pays.

* * *

Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne,
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumbering world.
Silence, how dread! and darkness, how profound!
Nor eye, nor listening ear, an object finds;
Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the general pulse
Of life stood still, and Nature made a pause;
An awful pause, prophetic of her end.”

This law of rest must be obeyed. There is no muscular frame so powerful that it can be disregarded; there is no pursuit so attractive that it can long cease to act; there is no joy so intense that sleep can be always driven away, that we may taste the bliss uninterrupted; and there is no sorrow so keen, however long it may drive sleep from the eyes, that will not ultimately yield to it,—either the calm sleep of

night, or the calmer slumbers of the grave. The mighty mind and the vigorous frame of Napoleon once enabled him to pass four days and nights in the exciting scenes of an active campaign without sleep, and then he fell asleep on his horse. The keenest torture which man has ever invented has been a device to drive sleep from the eyes, and to fix the body in such a position that it cannot find repose; and even this must fail, for the sufferer *will* find repose on the rack or in death.

The same law, demanding rest, exists also in relation to the mind, and is as imperious in regard to the intellectual and moral powers, in order to their permanent and healthful action, as to the muscles of the body. No man can long pursue an intellectual effort without repose. He who attempts to hold his mind long to one train of close thinking, he who pursues far an abstruse proposition, and he who is wrought up into a high state of excitement, must have relaxation and repose. If he does not yield to this law, his mind is unstrung, the mental faculties are thrown from their balance, and the frenzied powers, perhaps yet mighty, move with tremendous but irregular force, like an engine without balance wheel or "governor," and the man of high intellectual powers, like Lear, becomes a raving maniac. So with our moral feelings. The intensest zeal will not always be on fire, the keenest sorrow will find intermission, and even love does not always glow with the same ardour in the soul. This law, contemplating our welfare, cannot be violated without incurring a fearful penalty. If men will apply the powers of the body, or the mind, without relaxation; if they will deny themselves necessary rest, there is no recuperative or compensative power which nature has provided to remedy the evil. There is no constitution, however Herculean, that can bear up under the forced and unnatural effort. The most vigorous frame must yield, the most

gigantic powers will find rest in the grave. I need not remind you how often this principle is illustrated in our colleges, and in each of the learned professions. How many a youth is cut down by disregarding the law, that the body and mind must have rest, and by pushing his studies far into that time which nature has allotted to repose! How many a youth finds an early grave by seeking that which no man should ever seek, the reputation of trimming the midnight lamp! When will the world cease to mourn over the early fall of Henry Kirke White? a name redeemed from the imputation of folly only by the splendour of his genius and the purity of his heart, and by that sweet piety which breathed in all that he ever wrote; the pure sparkling beauty of those gems for which he laid down his life. The name of the youthful Mason, in our own land, will be remembered as much with sorrow that he wore out his years by intense application to one pursuit, regardless of health and life, as for the splendour of that talent which promised to place him at the head of the noblest of the sciences in this western world. The law which imposes on the generous and ardent nature of youth the necessity of rest from toil, which would have taught Kirke White and Mason to pause, and rest, honestly *rest*, is a benevolent law. It can never be violated without more ultimate harm than good. Whether this law, which nature has ordained, is sufficient for man without other seasons of rest of positive appointment, will be appropriately considered in another part of this discourse.

II. We have contemplated the young man in his relation to the law of nature, which demands periodical seasons of rest. Let us next consider him as exposed to influences which it would be desirable to check and control by some such institution as a Sabbath,—a day frequently returning, that should break in upon such influences, and bring those of another kind.

The influences to which I refer are those which spring from a uniform pursuit of any kind, and those which tend to sap the foundation of virtue.

1. The mind is not in a condition for its best development when it is under an *unbroken influence* of any kind, however good in itself. It is not made for one thing, but for many things; not for the contemplation of one object, but of many objects. Life is not all one thing; it is broken up into many interests, many hopes, many anxieties, many modifications of sorrow and joy. On the earth it is not all night, or all day, all sunshine, or all shade, all hill, or all vale, all spring, or all winter. No man is made exclusively for any one pursuit, or for the exercise of one class of affections or feelings only, or to touch on society, like a globe on a plain, only on one point. If there *were* such a being in the shape of a man, one who had a mind that *could* be applied only to one class of things, or affections that *could* love only one class of objects, he would be a monster; and towards this condition every man approximates who gives his whole soul with its varied powers to the unbroken pursuit of a single thing. Let him do nothing but read poetry, let him do nothing but tell his beads, or repeat his "paternoster," let him do nothing but study mathematics or metaphysics, or let him do nothing but make money; and valuable as any of those things may be in themselves, he never meets the full demands of his nature. There are powers of his soul, which are like those parts of the frames of animals which you see, where nature began to work, as if they might be of use, but which, never being employed, became utterly dried up and useless.

Now look one moment, for illustration, at the effect of *unbroken and uninterrupted worldliness* on a man's mind. The man referred to may develope, in the highest degree, the powers of mind which constitute the successful merchant;

he may have a far-reaching sagacity in business; he may never send out a vessel on an unsuccessful adventure; he may possess the powers of calculation in the highest degree; he may become rich, and build him a palace, and be "clothed in fine linen and purple;" but what is he then? Is he a *man* in the proper sense of the word *man*? There is but one single class of his faculties which has ever been developed, and he is *not* a man: he is but a calculating machine, though the powers of his nature may have been carried as far as possible in that direction. But what is he as a social being? Beyond the circle of the most limited range of topics he has no thoughts, no words. What is he as an intellectual being? Except in one limited department of the intellectual economy, his mind has never been cultivated at all. What is he as a man of sensibility, of refinement, of cultivated tastes? Not one of these things has been cultivated, and in none of them, unless by accident, has he any of the qualities of a man. What is he, in relation to the sympathies of a tender heart toward the poor, the needy, the oppressed? If those things are found in his books of account, they come within the range of his vision, but not otherwise. What is he in relation to the salvation of his own soul? Just as if he had none. What is he in relation to the world of sorrow and of sadness, and to the efforts which are made to alleviate its woes, and to raise it in the scale of being? He is acquainted with the world for commercial purposes only; he knows its geography, its ports of entry, its consuls, its custom-house laws; but he knows not the world as an abode of suffering and of wrong, and, I may add, as dressed up in exquisite beauty by its Maker. Man, in the costume of *China* or *India*, he knows as a trafficker: man, as made in the image of God, and as a moral being, he knows *not* in any estimate or land. This *material* influence on the mind

the Sabbath is adapted, without perilling anything good, to break up. We shall see that it would not be safe to do it without something to give occupancy to the interval, and that the kind of occupancy which the Sabbath would furnish is that which would prevent any evil, and which would introduce valuable influences of a much higher order.

2. The other kind of influences on the mind of a young man, which I said it is desirable to check, are those which tend to sap the foundations of virtue. I need not say that every young man is exposed to temptation. That is so obvious that it would not be profitable to dwell on it. I may remark, however, that in connexion with the subject of temptation every young man is on *trial* with reference to the question, what the community will intrust to him in future life. The world is favourably disposed towards young men. We, who have reached middle or advanced life, know full well—grey hairs and infirmities will keep us in mind of it, if it is too painful to dwell upon it voluntarily—that all that we have and all that we hold dear in church or state is soon to pass into other hands. Some youths in the crowd are even now coming forward slowly but steadily to elbow us out of the pulpit, out of our place at the bar, out of the circle of our practice in medicine, out of the exchange, out of the world. They are to own what we own now, and to carry forward our works, our plans of public improvement and benevolence. We are making up our minds to bear this crowding, and to make our exit from the stage with as good a grace as possible; but we cannot say that we have no solicitude about the *character* of those into whose hands all these things are soon to pass. Hence every young man is on trial alike before his co-equals and his sires. There is an eye of unslumbering vigilance on every young man,—more vigilant *and more* unslumbering than most young men suppose;

and the whole question, what portion of this rich general inheritance is to be intrusted to the hands of any one young man, is to be determined solely by the *character* which he shall form. Into that character on which all depends enter his views and principles, his habits of truth and industry and honesty, the manner in which he resists temptation, or yields to it; the triumphs which he achieves over powerful allurements to evil, or the ease with which he surrenders himself to the soft pleasures of indolence and sensuality. The character of every young man is known by the community where he lives, and he never yields to temptation without doing much to determine what he is to be in future life. The true question is, whether he is worthy of the *confidence* of the community,—worthy to be intrusted with business, with office, with clients, with patients, and, it is not improper to add, with the hand of a virtuous woman for a wife.

Let it also be added, that this trial extends through all the period of youth, and reaches wholly up to manhood. It is not sufficient to have escaped from one danger, to have emerged triumphantly from one form of temptation. The young man must have escaped *every* danger, must have gone safely through all forms of temptation. There is often a point in a young man's life when he *seems* to have escaped danger, but which is in fact the prelude to his ruin. He has passed through one form of peril, and seems to be safe; and yet from that very point he will move only to destruction. The mind may linger a little while; and then, when apparently safe, a new danger will arise, and, though the struggle may be arduous and torturing, it will be too late for rescue. On the great river that flows west of the Rocky Mountains to the ocean there is a place where the waters are compressed by the rocks into a narrow channel, and where the river suddenly falls many feet,

pitching and tumbling over the rocks. The passage is by no means unattended with danger, but it is not unfrequently made in a boat. Yet *below* that fall there is a deeper danger still; the water appears smooth, gliding onwards as though there were no treachery in its flow. The boat, having shot down the narrow passage, is seen to stop, and to lie without motion on the bosom of the waters. It neither goes forward nor backward, nor toward either shore, as if there were a moment of deliberation in which way it should go. Soon it begins to move, not forward, but in a circular direction. It moves so gently that one who knew not the perils of the place would feel no alarm; but then commences the fearful struggle. Round it is swept with increasing velocity in spite of the efforts of the boatmen. Every oar is plied, every nerve of the oarsmen is stretched, every effort possible made at the bow and the stern to turn the boat from that fatal current. It goes round and round and round, in spite of deathlike exertion, increasing in rapidity as the circles grow smaller, until, having reached the centre, in an instant the boat and all its crew disappear. Rare is it that a fragment of the boat is seen afterwards, or that a body that is lost is recovered. So there are points in the lives of young men when they seem to have escaped the greatest perils, and when there seems to be no dangerous tendency in any direction. Yet soon there is a movement, perhaps commencing far from the vortex, and there is a struggle; but the current sweeps him to ruin. The young men who are lost by intemperance and sensuality do not perish without a struggle. They do not lay their oars calmly down, and let the current sweep them on. It is after many a struggle, when too late,—it is after many a conflict, when the power that bears them forward has secured a firm grasp,—that they perish. Now what the *young* man needs for his safety is some steady influence

in favour of virtue that shall bear him through every danger, some power acting on his soul at every point, when he *seems* to be safe, and when he is *seen* to be in danger; when he has escaped one manifest place of peril, and when he glides into a more dangerous position, though it *seems* to be safe; some steady influence that shall accompany him up to manhood, and place him in safety on that elevation beyond all the dangers that beset youth. The question now before us is, Whether the Sabbath, properly observed, would exert such an influence on the mind of a young man? Or perhaps the true question in regard to the young men of this land in fact would be, since this day *will* be a day of suspended toil, Whether, if improperly observed, it will not do more than all other things else to sweep him on to destruction, even when he feels most secure?

III. We have contemplated the young man in his relation to the general law, which demands periodical seasons of rest, and in reference to the influences over him which it would be desirable to check and control by some such institution as the Sabbath. Let us now for a moment consider him as designed to be a religious being.

We have already seen that the perfection of man cannot be secured in body or mind by the exclusive cultivation of one set of the bodily organs, or one class of the mental faculties. The idea which I wish now to suggest is, that his perfection cannot be reached without regarding his religious susceptibilities, or considering him as designed to be a religious being. Man has higher interests than those connected with bodily or mental toil. He is not a mere pack-horse, a mere beast of burden, a mere machine, to build pyramids and to dig canals; a mere animal for carrying a load up and down the hills and along the plains of

life. He has other things to attend to than to fell trees, or to plough the ground, or to sink a shaft in the earth, or to sit by a crucible, or to look through a telescope at the stars. He is a moral agent, a sinner, a traveller to another state of existence, a candidate for a higher sphere of being. There is a wretched mistake, which men are constantly making, and which is fostered by most of the plans and arrangements of this life, and in many cases by what seems almost to be the necessity of the case. It is that of regarding this world as all, and time as valuable only as it contributes to the success of the calling to which we have devoted our lives. A man may be so intent on gain, and may regard that as so much the only object of existence, as to consider the time taken up in the perusal of a book, or even the reading of a newspaper,—except the portion relating to the state of the market,—and all time spent in social enjoyment with his own family or neighbours, as so much dead loss. With sad reflections on himself, he may think how much money he *might* have made in those very hours now wasted. In like manner, a youth may be so occupied in his classical and professional studies as to consider all the time taken in cultivating the amenities and social tendencies of his nature as so much waste. And with a perversity of view not less, men come to feel that this world is the great object of living, and that all the time taken for religion, for the cultivation of the heart, and for prayer, and for praise, is so much wasted. The time employed for that, whether the Sabbath or other days, is the same as abstracting so many dollars and cents from the actual wealth of a community, and is thus a total loss in respect to the purpose for which man should live. With some considerable good the maxim of Dr. Franklin, so well known and remembered, that “time is money,” has done infinite mischief. As though time were nothing else than

money! As though that were the only object for which man should live! As though literature were nothing, and social enjoyment were nothing, and the claims of benevolence were nothing, and it were nothing to cultivate the heart, and to prepare for another world! To a man under the full influence of such a maxim, a Sabbath of course becomes a dead loss, a mere waste, a bog and fen of life, a Campagna, producing only a dull and deadly malaria, blighting every form of life; for it produces nothing in the only purpose for which life is given. It has prevented his ploughing so many roods of land, or selling so many yards of cloth, or manufacturing so many articles in his line, or hastening so many miles on his way to the El Dorado of his hopes. With such a miserable view of human life as this is, the Sabbath is of course a waste, a burden, and a curse. But man has higher interests than to make money, and time is given to him just as certainly with reference to those interests, as it is to those which pertain to this life. He is intended to be a *religious* being; and until he is he never reaches the end for which he is made. He has a soul to save. He has intrusted to him the business of preparing for eternity. He is a rational, an accountable being, as well as a maker of money; he is a candidate for the crown incorruptible, as well as a builder of houses, and a trafficker in stocks, and corn, and cotton, and broad-cloths.

This leads me to say, then, that there is a work which *ought* to be done in every man's soul, just such as contemplated to be done on the Sabbath. There is always an accumulation of bad influences in the uninterrupted pursuits of this life, which a man ought periodically to throw off. It is an advantage for a man who is engaged in the world to pause and reflect, lest his worldliness should obtain the entire mastery, and he should forget everything else. Every man is subject to passion, to pride, to envy, to

ambition, to impatience under provocation and trial; and it is well to pause, lest these things rivet on him the fetters of perpetual servitude. One class of society is in danger of living for gaiety and vanity, and it is well for them to pause and inquire whether there are no higher and nobler ends of life than these. We become excited in the political world, we become engaged in contention and strifes, we allow unkind thoughts of a neighbour to obtain a lodgment in the soul; and there is an advantage in taking time for cool reflection, and for allowing the tempests of life to blow over, and the mind to become calm again. Need I say here that all the appropriate duties of the Sabbath—the duties of religion—are just fitted to meet these dangers of the soul, and to restore it to its pursuits in this world with a weakened inclination to evil, and with a strengthened purpose to do right?

I am now speaking of the young man as a *religious* being, and of the place which religion is designed to occupy in our character, if that character is complete. I have not time to expand the thoughts which suggest themselves on this point, or to illustrate the influence which religion is designed to exert in order to the completion of the just idea of a man. Nor have I time to state the advantages growing out of the religious principle, and of the fact that man was designed to be a religious being, of which a young man *might* avail himself in order to make the most of himself as an intellectual and a moral being, as a son, a brother, a husband, a father, a man of science, a citizen, a friend of humanity. I will just say, First, That the religious sentiment, or the religious susceptibility, exists peculiarly in the human bosom, in man alone, of all the creatures of God here below, and in all men, unless it has been extinguished by vice, or overlaid by worldliness. Second, That it is the most powerful of all principles that reign in the human

soul, and can be made to accomplish as much for good or for evil in the world as any other power or principle in man ; whether in the form of *superstition*, binding hundreds of millions of minds to the low forms of religion, so that they can never rise and assert the dignity of their individual nature ; or in the form of *fanaticism*, arming millions for conquest, and pouring embattled legions on peaceful nations, to spread the desolations of war ; or in the form of *principle*, leading man to curb his impetuous passions, and to lead a life of integrity amidst the temptations of the world ; or in the form of *benevolence*, leading a man like Howard to spend his life amidst the pestilential dungeons of Europe, or Henry Martyn to turn away from the highest literary honours, and to seek the salvation of the wandering heathen. Third, Religion is destined to play a part in this world which nothing else is, and to accomplish for man what nothing else can ; for there is no intellectual cultivation, no grace of manners, no sentiment of honour, honesty, or patriotism, which can do in this world what religion does. It stands by itself,—a principle most mighty, and made most efficacious for the good of man. A principle of our nature thus mighty, thus capable of good influences, thus susceptible to perversion, and yet thus certainly destined to act in the world, has a *claim* on the attention of a young man. He should know what it is, what it means, why it has been placed in the human bosom, and how much may be made of it in this world and the next. I need not say that it is primarily with reference to this that the Sabbath has been appointed.

As an illustration of the power of religious principles in controlling men, and at the same time to show how deeply the love of the institution which I advocate was imbedded in the hearts of the fathers of this republic, I may refer to one of the earliest incidents in our history. The “May-

flower"—a name now immortal—had crossed the ocean. It had borne its hundred passengers over the vast deep, and, after a perilous voyage, had reached the bleak shores of New England in the beginning of winter. The spot which was to furnish a home was now to be selected. The shallop was to be unshipped, and, after sixteen weary days in repairing it, during which the vessel was at anchor, was sent out amidst ice and snow, with some half-a-dozen pilgrims, to find a suitable place to land. The spray of the sea, says the historian, froze on them, and made their clothes like coats of iron. Five days they wandered about, searching in vain for a suitable landing-place. A storm came on, and the snow and the rain fell; the sea swelled, the rudder broke, the mast and sail fell overboard. In this storm and cold, without a tent, a house, or a shelter of a rock, the Christian Sabbath approached,—the day which they regarded as wholly the Lord's,—a day on which they were not to "do any work." What should be done? As the evening before the Sabbath drew on, they pushed over the surf, entered a fair sound, sheltered themselves under the lee of a rise of land, kindled a fire, and on that little island they spent the day in the solemn worship of their Maker. On their next day their feet touched the rock now sacred as the place of the landing of the pilgrims. The whole scene—the cold winter, the raging sea, the driving storm, the houseless, homeless island, the families of wives and children in the distance, weary with the voyage, and impatient to land; and yet the sacred observances of a day, which they kept from principle—shows how much religion may do to control men; how it may shape human life; how little a man under the influence of religion will be affected by surrounding difficulties; and of what importance they regarded the Sabbath to be for themselves and their children.

I have gone through two of the inquiries on which I pro-

posed to address you; the question what the Sabbath is designed to accomplish, and what there is in the condition and prospects of a young man to which such an institution may be adapted. There remains but one other point in order to the completion of the argument which I proposed. It is, How will the observance of the Sabbath contribute to the promotion of these objects?

It would not be right for me to tax your patience much longer; yet I will venture to ask your attention to a few thoughts in answer to this inquiry.

Keeping, therefore, a young man in view in the aspects already referred to, as an individual and a member of the community, as demanding periodical seasons of rest, as exposed to temptations, and as endowed by his Creator with a nature susceptible to being influenced by religion, I would submit the following remarks:—

1. First. That it is now a settled principle in every community that there will be periodical days of cessation from toil, days of *rest*. There never has been a nation which has supposed that the labours of this life were to be continued without interruption, or without periodical seasons for relaxation. In the course of events, and by actual experiments made everywhere, it is settled that the seasons of repose which nature has ordained in the intermitted action of the muscles, and in sleep, are not enough for man. Everywhere it has been determined that there is a necessity for periodical days of rest frequently recurring; and everywhere men have found that by such intervals of rest they could make more of life, and could be more sure of a healthful body, and of a vigorous intellect, than they could by unintermitted toil; and that, however such days might be spent, and whatever might be their influence on society, there would be, and *must* be, such days of relaxation from toil. This may be regarded as a law, as well settled in regard to society as

the law demanding rest in the action of the muscular system, and rest at night. There never has been a lawgiver who has made arrangements for uninterrupted toil, or who has not contemplated some seasons for relaxation, for social pastimes, or for the duties of religion. Such arrangements have entered into all systems of legislation, from Solon and Numa to Charles II., from the laws of Sparta to the Book of Sports; and they now enter into the arrangements of all monarchs who sway an arbitrary sceptre, and of all free men who form a constitution for a republic. An arrangement under a human government which should contemplate continued and uninterrupted toil, which should presume that the rest provided by nature in the muscular system, or in sleep, was all that is needful for a man, would soon fall to pieces by its own weight, and be broken up in confusion.

The facts on this point are too numerous and too well known to make it needful for me to go into any detail. I need not remind the student of Hebrew customs that the Jew had secured to him by law every seventh day, and every seventh year, and every fiftieth year, in addition to numerous festivals and fasts occurring every year; that this arrangement extended to every class in the community, and that it was guaranteed to the servant as well as to his master, to the peasant as well as the prince, to the operative classes as well as to the ecclesiastical orders. I need not remind the student of classical literature that periodical seasons of rest were secured under the models of government to which he is accustomed to refer,—Greece and Rome. He has only to look into his Potter or his Eschenberg to see how this matter was arranged, to see how many days in each year were regarded as sacred,—days in which toil was to be suspended, days devoted to the worship of particular gods, or to the commemoration of important events; days in which even the yoke was loosed from the neck of the

slave, and he was permitted to taste the sweets of momentary freedom. To such a student I need not say that if all those festivals had been observed by an individual, the number of days which would have been so employed in each year would have exceeded by far what would be demanded by the observance of the Christian Sabbath; and that, in the Grecian and Roman community at large, the amount of actual interruption of the course of business, gain, studies, was much greater than would arise from the observance of the Christian Sabbath after the most rigid of the Scottish, or Genevan, or Puritan notions. To him who has studied the history of the French Revolution,—and who has not?—I need not say that in the highest state of frenzy of that time, and in the midst of the most determined madness against all the institutions of revealed religion, the *decade* was appointed, and every tenth day was made a Sabbath of rest and of relaxation from toil. In all the madness of the leaders of that wonderful revolution, they never dreamed that the physical energies of the people could be uninterruptedly taxed, or that the wheels of commerce, and ambition, and war, could be always rolled on. They knew that the powers of man demanded repose, they knew that there were times, when, if the state would live, even the wheels of desolation and crime, clogged with gore, must be suffered periodically to stand still. And need I remind you of the festivals of Egypt, and Persia, and Chaldea? Need I tell you that there is not now a heathen nation, or tribe of men, whose institutions do not contemplate a cessation of this world's business, to attend on the worship of the gods? It never yet entered into the brain of any political enthusiast, however crazed, that a nation could prosper without some seasons periodically occurring of cessation from labour.

2. Secondly. This leads me to observe that in this

land, whatever other days may be set apart for this purpose, the first day of the week *will be*. We have few festivals, and the general spirit of our people is against their being increased. But the first day of the week *will be* set apart as a day of relaxation from labour; and it can never, without an entire change in our national feelings, habits, and laws, be placed on the same level as the other days of the week. That it is to be a day of rest, a day on which the ordinary affairs of life are to be suspended, is recognised in all our laws and customs, in all contracts between man and man, in the suspension of business, in the halls of legislation, in the closing of banks, and stores, and courts, and schools, in the settled habits of the aged, and in the plans of the middle-aged, and in the feelings of childhood. You would violate the habits formed through the longest life, if you were to deny this to the old man; you would deprive the child of what he feels even thus early to be a birthright, if you were to compel him to go to the common school on the first day of the week; you would infringe on rights which every young man knows he has, if you were to insert in his indentures of apprenticeship that he was to work on a Sunday. The Sabbath in this country can never be made a day of labour. Here and there, indeed, it may be by an individual; but it can never be by the community at large. Here and there a man may go into the woods to fell trees; but the sound of his axe will be different to him from what it is on other days; and in the stillness which reigns around him when nobody else works, the echoing of his own blows will frighten him. Here and there a man will go into his fields to plough; but he will feel that the eyes of his neighbours are upon him, and a consciousness of guiltiness will come over him, and he will let his plough stand still in some distant nook of his field, while his neighbour passes by on his way to the

house of God. Here and there a man will open his store, but it will be with the uncomfortable feeling which one has always who goes against the general judgment of mankind. Here and there a man will go into his counting-room to post his books, or to write his letters; but he will wish to enter and come out by stealth, and at such times that he will not be likely to be seen. And here and there, too, a man will wander through a forest, or along the margin of a stream, with his fishing-rod, or his gun; but the very stillness of the grove, or the warblings of the birds, or the sweet and gentle music of the rivulet, so much in unison with the worship of God, but so little with his own employment, will rebuke him. It is out of the question: this day cannot be made a day of business, or of school-teaching, or of travel extensively in this land. Then I remark,

3. Thirdly. That one of two things is clear. It is to be a light to the old and the young, an eminent blessing or an eminent curse. If a blessing, it is to be one of the richest that can be vouchsafed to us; if a curse, one of the direst that can come upon the nation. You cannot take out from human life one seventh part, and release all men from the necessity of toil, without producing some decided effect on their intellect and their morals. You cannot disband all your schools, and discharge your clerks and apprentices, and release all the working classes in a community on one day in every seventh, without originating new influences that are destined to affect for good or for evil every individual and every social organization in the land. If to this discharged multitude you open every place of amusement and vice, if you establish and legalize fountains of poison at the corner of every street, and along every pathway where they may choose to wander, you may soon bid farewell to everything that is dear to us as

citizens and as men, to the whole purchase which our fathers made with so much treasure and so much blood. For we shall have a Sabbath. We shall have it as long as these streams run and these mountains lift their heads on high. If it is not a day of rest, and purity, and religion, it will be a day of amusement, and vice, and blasphemy, and crime. We must have the law of God reigning in this land on this subject, or the "Book of Sports;" we must have the quiet, and order, and peace of the Christian Sabbath, or the Roman Saturnalia; we must have a day of worship, or a day of military reviews, and horse-racing, and bull-fights; we must have the Puritan Sabbath, or a day for universal amusement, as at Vienna; a day for the ring, as at Madrid and Mexico; a day for theatres and military parades, as they have at Paris. The question to be determined is this, and this only, whether the nation can afford to have one day in seven as a day of riot and disorder, a Saturnalia, occurring more than fifty times in a year, when Rome in the most palmy days of her virtue could scarcely survive the effects of one. This leads me to say,

4. Fourthly. That this day may be made eminently conducive to the maintenance and stability of all that we value in this land. The proper observance of the Sabbath is fitted to make all our young men just such citizens as our institutions contemplate,—temperate, intelligent, pure, patriotic, devoted to virtue, to their country, and to their God. The observance of this day is adapted to foster all those virtues which are essential to the purity of the elective franchise; to secure just such instruction as shall fit every man to perform his duty as a citizen in the best manner; and to diffuse over our country just such a tone of morals as shall be adapted, under the great laws of God's government, to perpetuate our liberty. There is not

a virtue, contemplated by the constitution as necessary to the permanency of the Republic, which would not be strengthened by the observance of the Sabbath. There is not a vice or crime, on account of which God has overwhelmed other nations, which would not be checked and restrained by such an observance; and there is not a vice or crime, on account of which God in His anger overthrew Sodom, Babylon, and Herculaneum, which would not be fostered, hastening on our destruction, by the *desecration* of this day.

It is in reference to such points as these, that every young man is to form his opinion and regulate his conduct in regard to the observance of a day of sacred rest. Every young man, in view of his constitution and wants as an individual, and as a social being; in view of the toils, the trials, the duties, and the temptations of life; in view of the fact that the most momentous interests of liberty and religion in the world are soon to pass into his hands; and in view of the fact that he has interests in other worlds at stake, compared with which all his interests on this globe are trifles, is to make up his mind whether he *needs* such a day of rest, and whether it may be made to contribute to his own future welfare.

Let me add one word in conclusion. It should not be a day of idleness; it need not be a day of gloom. There is enough to be accomplished in every soul by duties appropriate to the day, to rescue every moment from tedium and ennui. If it were as pleasant to man to cultivate his heart as it is his intellectual powers; if he felt it to be as momentous to prepare for the life to come, as for the present world; if he delighted in the service of his Maker, as he does in the society of his friends below, the difficulty would not be that it would be impossible to fill up the day, but that the hours on the Sabbath had taken a

more rapid flight than on other days, and that the shades of the evening came around us when our work was but half done. Let this one thought be borne with you to your homes, if no other, that the appropriate work of the Sabbath is *the heart*, all about the heart, all that can bear upon it, all that can make it better; and, I am persuaded, you will see no want of appropriate employment for one day in seven. See what there is in your heart permanently abiding there, that demands correction. See what an accumulation of bad influences there may be during the toils and turmoils of the week, that may require removal. See how in the business of the world, in domestic cares, in professional studies or duties, the heart may be neglected, and there may arise a sad disproportion between the growth of the intellect and the proper affections of the soul. See how, in the gaieties and vanities of life, the pursuits of pleasure, the love of flattery and applause, there may have been a steady growth of bad propensities through the week, not, for one moment, broken or checked. See how there may have been a silent but steady growth of avarice, pride, or ambition, all through the week, riveting the fetters of slavery on the soul, and bringing you into perpetual and ignoble bondage. See the tendency of all these things to harden the heart, to chill the affections, to stifle the voice of conscience, and to make the mind grovelling and worldly. See what an unnatural growth the intellect of man sometimes attains to, while all the finer feelings of his nature, like fragrant shrubs and beautiful flowers under the dense foliage of a far spreading oak, are overshadowed and stunted. And then see what in nature and in grace is open for the cultivation of the heart,—the worship of God adapted to assimilate the soul to the Creator, the Bible full of precepts and promises bearing *directly on the heart*, the rich and inexhaustible treasures in

our own English religious literature, the lessons of morality, purity, and benevolence, and the sacred effusions of the poetic muse, adapted to raise the soul to God. See a world of sinners and sufferers accessible to your benevolent efforts, and capable of being benefitted by your counsels and your prayers. See the ignorant on every hand that need to be instructed; children, in every city, village, and hamlet, that need to be taught the way to heaven; a world full of the ignorant and the suffering that demand your sympathy. Then, contemplate your own soul,—a soul immortal as God,—to be saved or lost; its great work of preparation for another state of being, perhaps, not yet commenced; the whole business of being renovated, pardoned, sanctified, to be yet performed; death to be prepared for, and to be met in a proper manner: look upon these things, and you will not say that God has not given you enough to do on this holy day to rescue it from dulness and gloom. Every mind may be in such a state, that the happiest day of the week may be the day of holy rest; and, imperfectly as it is observed and enjoyed now on earth, I am persuaded that there *is* more pure joy, more solid and elevated happiness, more that approximates the enjoyment of heaven, on this day, than on any other of the seven. In how many happy hearts on this day is that heaven begun in the soul which shall never end! There is many, many a heart that appreciates all the force and beauty of these words:—

“ Sweet day, thine hours too soon will cease;
 Yet, while they gently roll,
 Breathe, Holy Spirit, source of peace,
 A Sabbath o’er my soul.

“ When will my pilgrimage be done?
 The world’s long week be o’er?
 That Sabbath dawn which needs no sun?
 That day which fades no more?”

SERMON XIII.

THE REJECTED CALL OF WISDOM.

“BECAUSE I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.”—Prov. i. 24–28.

THIS is the language of Wisdom, that is, of religion addressing men;—Wisdom, or religion personified, appealing to mankind; reminding them of the variety of calls and remonstrances which it makes, and of the manner in which those calls and remonstrances are commonly met; assuring them that as a consequence of thus disregarding the appeals of religion a day of distress and anguish must come upon them, and that it then will be too late to avail themselves of the counsels and blessings of true religion. The form is that of direct address to those who have disregarded the appeals of religion; and that will be the best form for us to follow in illustrating the subject. Let us take up the points suggested in the text in their order, supposing that the voice of Wisdom in the text is now addressing those who are in this house.

I. The manner in which it has called upon you,—in which the appeals of Wisdom and of religion have been made. “I have called;” “I have stretched out my hand.”

The appeal here may be regarded as made to all; for though its form has varied, there are none whom religion *has not* addressed; none whom she has not invited to her

embrace. There are none whose attention has not been called to it; none who have not been entreated to become children of God. The invitations and the calls of heavenly Wisdom were among the first that fell on the ear in childhood; they are among those which have been most frequently and urgently repeated; they are those which have come with the best claims to attention. In the manner, the variety, the intensity, the tenderness, the unwearied nature, and the sleepless watchfulness of appeal, nothing has occurred that can be compared with the calls which have been made to you to abandon a sinful course, and to give your heart to God. They were made to you in childhood, they were repeated in youth, they were continued in riper years, they have been pressed upon you with all the more earnestness as old age has approached. The subject has been urged upon your attention when you have been well, and when you have been sick; when you have been alone, and when you have been with others; in the silence of the night watches, and in the great congregation. Conscience has pleaded with you, and urged you to give up your sins; to pray, to turn to God, to secure the salvation of your souls, and through your conscience Wisdom has always been speaking to you, and urging you to tread in the strait and narrow path. Reason has appealed to you, and Wisdom has spoken to you through its appeals. It has had but one voice, urging the propriety of serving God, of keeping His commands, of securing the salvation of the soul, admonishing you of the danger of neglect and delay, and pressing upon you the supreme importance of religion; and in all the tumult of passion, and all the whirl of pleasure, and all the storms of ambition, it has been telling you that for man the path of wisdom is to lay a good foundation for the world to come. The providences of God have appealed to you, and called you to

attend to the soul. Now, when you have been sick, and thought you felt the cold finger of death laid on your palpitating, struggling heart; now, when raised up from your bed, brought from the borders of the grave to live a little longer; now, when just escaped from the perils of shipwreck, snatched from a watery grave; now, when the pestilence breathing around you has made you feel that you were walking among the dying and the dead; now, when you have seen the young, the talented, and the gay, the bridegroom and the bride, suddenly cut off; now, when you have seen your own dear son or daughter, father, mother, wife, or husband die, and utter darkness and desolation came into your dwelling; religion appealed to you, showed you how vain was all earthly good, how sure death was to you, how much you needed the consolations of Christian hope, what a poor, miserable, comfortless man you are, with no prospect of heaven, and no God to go to in your troubles. Self-interest has appealed to you in behalf of religion. Your great interests are in religion; your most momentous concerns beyond the grave. There you are to live for ever. There your condition is to be unchanging. There you are to be happy or miserable to all eternity; and happiness or misery there once begun is only to increase,—never to diminish, never to terminate. Here all is soon to be at an end,—joy or sorrow, poverty or wealth, honour or shame,—all are soon to close. The vapour on the mountain side soon vanishes away; so will your life. The colours so gorgeously painted on the cloud that lies along the western sky soon disappear; so will all that is gay and gorgeous in life. Eternity alone is unchanging, and eternity is all. Your great interests are there; and Wisdom stands amidst these vanishing vapours and these evanescent beauties, and tells you that your great interests lie all beyond the tomb *in the “spirit world,”* and urges you to make that safe and

secure. Your friends have appealed to you, and religion has appealed to you through them. Your friends, your best friends, have earnestly conjured you to give up the world and sin, and to yield the heart to God. Here a father, here a mother, there a wife, there a sister, there a child, there a bosom companion, has pleaded with you, and urged you with strong crying and tears to become a Christian. You cannot recollect the scenes of childhood, not even the nursery, without remembering the appeals that broke on the infant ear in favour of religion. You cannot go back in memory to the days of your youth without thinking of the path that led to the house of God, the Sabbath, and the sanctuary, and the appeals which religion made to you then. You cannot think of heaven and the dwellers there, without thinking of some there, parent, or pastor, or bosom friend, who often pleaded with you to give the heart to God. You cannot go into the still and crowded cemetery without fancying that the mother or the sister who sleeps there still speaks, and urges the son, the brother, to give up the world and prepare to die. The ministers of religion have appealed to you, and Wisdom has spoken to you in her appeals. The pastor whom you have seen reason only to respect and venerate, whose sincerity you have never doubted, and the force of whose appeals you have often felt, has pleaded with you. Strangers who were eloquent have come to confirm these appeals, and to urge the claims of religion by new arguments and illustrations. You do not doubt their sincerity, you cannot gainsay the reasonableness of their appeals; you have often, under those appeals, been "almost persuaded to be a Christian." And, finally, the Spirit of God, accompanying all these appeals, has often pressed the subject of religion upon you as a personal matter, and brought it home to the conscience and the heart. You have been serious. You have wept.


You have prayed. You have been found among anxious inquirers after salvation. You have opened the word of God desirous of knowing what is truth, and have longed for some one to come and tell you how a sinner may be saved. A hundred, perhaps a thousand times, you have been serious, thoughtful, pensive. The world has seemed to you then to have little that was worth living for, and somehow you could scarcely tell how it had lost all its charms, its gayest scenes had become cheerless, and the mind was drawn along to the grave, to the judgment seat, to a vast eternity.

In the silent evening, when returning from your daily toil, you have been pensive and sad ; perhaps its gathering shadows inevitably reminding you of the shades of that solemn evening which closes life, "when no man can work." On your bed, in the night watches, you have found your eyes "held waking ;" for somehow—whether by the stillness, the darkness, or the resemblance to death, you could not tell—you thought, how silent and dark is the grave, how solemn is eternity. In times of disappointment, when your plans have been frustrated and blasted, the Spirit of God has made you thoughtful, and led you to inquire whether there is not a world where disappointment will never come. In times of chagrin, of mortification, when your claims to notice and distinction were not allowed as you supposed they should have been, you have been sad, and you could not help thinking of another world. In the storm, the tempest, when the lightnings have played and when the thunders have crashed—at midnight—in the graveyard—you have been made serious, pensive, solemn. You have felt that you were to die ; you have felt that you were a sinner ; you have felt that it is a solemn thing to go into the world that is eternal, and to abodes that are now unseen. Then the Spirit of the living God addressed you ;

then religion spake to you ; then "Wisdom" warned you, called you, admonished you, entreated you to give up your sins, to give up the world, to give up your heart to God ; then the heavenly voice called you to prepare to meet God.

II. The manner of the reception of this call. "Ye refused ;" "No man regarded." You have neglected those calls and warnings. You paid no attention to them, as if they did not pertain to you, or as if they had no claim to your regard. You have desired a state of mind that would be indifferent to them, and where you need not be made sad by them, or wearied and worried with them. You went, notwithstanding these calls, and engaged in other things, as if you had not been summoned to God and to heaven. One went to his farm, and another to his merchandise, and another to his amusements, and another to his life of sin. In your counting-room, or in your schemes of ambition, or in the world of gaiety, you have led such a life that you expected and desired not to be troubled with serious impressions about God and the soul. You have neglected to pray, when you ought to have prayed ; you have refused to read the Bible, when you ought to have sought counsel from God ; you have been among the gay and the thoughtless, when you ought to have been among the praying and devout. You have studiously concealed your feelings, when you have been serious ; you have hoped that time, and company, and business would make you cheerful again. You have endeavoured to embrace some plausible form of doctrine that would be an opiate to the conscience, and allow you undisturbed and unannoyed to enjoy the world. You have sought some device by which you might lead a life of vanity without trouble from the dread of death. You have endeavoured so to form your plans of life that you need not be distressed with the constant fear of dying, and so that you need not be chafed and galled by

the appeals made to you to serve God. When these solemn truths of religion have been pressed closely on your attention, when your conscience has been troubled, when you have felt that you were indeed a sinner before God, and that you *ought* to yield to Him and serve Him,—then, to these feelings and convictions you have offered a decided resistance. You have refused to yield when you knew you ought to yield, you have refused to pray when you knew you ought to pray, you have refused to become a Christian when you knew you ought to be a meek and humble follower of the Saviour. You have argued against the truth, you have cavilled against the truth, you have urged excuses that you might not obey the truth. You have sought plausible reasons for neglecting to do what you knew to be your duty. You have taken refuge under the imperfection of Christians, for not being yourself a Christian: you have embraced false, and absurd, and monstrous opinions, simply because you did not wish to give up the world, and to become a Christian. You have done this long. In some cases it has been the work of a life; in all cases it has been a leading object of life thus far. Had you yielded when God first called you, you would long since have been a Christian; but with many of you it has become a settled habit to resist all the calls and appeals of religion, and you expect to be successful in doing it hereafter, as you have done heretofore. You go to a funeral with that expectation, you go to church with that expectation, you listen to the closest arguments in favour of religion with that expectation, you sit under the most pungent appeals of the Gospel with that expectation. You came here at the present time with no expectation of yielding to God and becoming a Christian; you expect now to leave this house unmoved and unconverted by all that I can say. You are often convinced by our arguments, but you will not yield



to them ; you are often urged powerfully by your own conscience to give yourself to God, but you refuse. While God calls you to a life of religion, you turn contemptuously to a life of vanity ; while He calls you to admire His character, and to love Him, you become lost in admiration of dress ; while He calls you to go to the cross as a poor penitent, to confess your sins and be saved, you go to the ball-room to dissipate serious reflections, to forget your Saviour, and to trifle away the precious moments of probation. While He points you to the "narrow way," and the "strait gate," you crowd along regardless with the multitude to the wide gate—the "broad way"—that leadeth to destruction. If you ask, "Who?" I answer, You, ye gay, ye worldly, ye prayerless, ye vain, ye lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; ye who live as if this world were all, and are conscious that you turn a deaf ear to all the calls and invitations of the Gospel of Christ : you know who are meant ; for you have not lived thus long without knowing that it is the purpose of your own life *not* to be a Christian.

III. The effect of neglecting and disregarding these calls. "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." Death will come ; he will certainly come. He cannot be evaded ; he cannot be put back ; he cannot be made to take his steps any slower. O, he will come ! All that lives on earth will die ; every beast, bird, and creeping thing ; the eagle, the humming-bird, the insect that flutters in the sunbeam ; every tree, and shrub, and flower ; the oak, the pine, the acacia, the moss that grows over the wall ; every monarch, every peasant ; every rich man, every poor man ; every slave, every master of a slave ; every man, every woman, every child ; every old man, that prides himself on his honours and his wealth ;

every young man, that prides himself on his talents or his strength; every maiden, that prides herself on her beauty. O, all will die! I am in a world of death. I am amidst the dying and the dead. I see not a living thing in all my rambles that will not die,—no man, no woman, no child,—no bird, no beast, no plant, no tree. The eagle, that cuts the air, cannot fly above it; the monster of the deep cannot dive below it. The tiny insect cannot make itself so insignificant that death will not notice it; leviathan cannot, with his great strength, struggle against it. The Christian will die, the sinner will die; yea, the sinner. Your wealth cannot save you; your accomplishments cannot save you. Death cares for none of these things. They are all trifles, gewgaws, beneath his notice. He no more loves “a shining” mark than an ignoble one; he has no more pride in cutting down the rich man than the poor man; the daughter of beauty and fashion, than the daughter of ugliness and sin. He loves to level the thistle, as well as the rose-bud; the bramble, as the magnolia; the brier, as the cedar of Lebanon. He cares as little for the robe of ermine, as the beggar’s rags; as little for your richest vestments and gayest apparel, as for the blanket of the savage. You will die, and the fear of death will come upon you. Death comes just as he is,—pale, solemn, fixed, stern, determined on his work. He hears no cry for pity; he regards no shriek of terror. He comes steady, certain, unchanged, and unchangeable in his purpose to take you out of your bed of down, to hurry you away from your splendid dwelling, to call you out of the assembly-room,—taking you away from the companions that will miss you but for a moment, and then resume their dance,—that you may die. Death will come. He has been advancing towards you since you began to breathe. He has kept on his way, always advancing to meet you, while you have been

asleep or awake ; and if you have gone north, or south, or east, or west, he has always put himself in your path,—how near, or how remote, you have never known. Death will come. He has always been coming ; advancing, never receding ; and soon his baleful shadow will fall upon your path. And that shadow will deepen and become more chilly, like an advancing eclipse ; and then his dark form will stand right before you, between you and the light of the living world, and you will be in the dark valley. Death will come, fearful enough under any circumstances, even if you are a Christian ; awful, unspeakably awful, if you are not.

The fear of the judgment-day will come upon you, for that cannot always be avoided. It is to come to all human beings ; and that is to be a solemn day, when we shall give up our account for the deeds done in the body, and hear the sentence which is to determine our everlasting doom. You have endeavoured, and to a melancholy extent have succeeded in your endeavours, to make your mind insensible to this subject ; and, perhaps, for months, possibly even for years, it has never seriously occurred to you that you are to appear before your Maker on so solemn a business. Yet in the cares of life, in the engrossment of business, in the whirl of pleasure, you have merely concealed this fact from your view ; you have not affected its reality, you have only put a little further from you what *must* sooner or later be contemplated in all the solemnity of its import. Somewhere, either when in health, and before we are driven to it by the mere fear of death, or on the bed of lingering sickness, where we may calmly contemplate the future world, or in the terror and alarm of sudden death, we *must* look at the judgment bar, we must think of giving up our account, we must reflect on the solemnity of that moment, when we shall stand before our final Judge. The

fear of this will come upon the sinner. You cannot always be insensible to it ; you cannot always be immersed in the cares of the world ; you cannot always be busy with briefs, or with merchandise ; you cannot always move in the circles of festivity, amidst songs and dances ; for you must die, and must go before your Judge. It is a solemn thing for a man to be arraigned before a human tribunal, on a high charge of crime ; and when the question, whether he is to live or die, is to depend on the opening of the lips of the foreman of a jury, and on the utterance of one little word ; and neither by indifference, nor by jesting, can he make anything else of it : and so it will be a much more solemn thing to stand before your final Judge, when the question of your everlasting joy or sorrow, of life or death eternal, shall depend on the opening of His lips. The apprehension of this will come upon you, and all that there is that is fearful in the apprehension will be experienced, and will be heightened by all the pains that you have taken to forget it, and by all your folly in refusing to hearken to the voice of Wisdom.

Desolation and destruction will come upon the impenitent and ungodly, and upon you, if you are found among the impenitent and the ungodly ; upon all who have continued to refuse while God has called, who have not regarded when He has stretched out His hands. God says, " He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." He has solemnly said, also, that " the wicked shall be turned into hell." He has solemnly declared, also, that " the wicked is drawn away in his wickedness." He has, as if borne down Himself with a sense of the folly, the wickedness, and the danger of man, with all the tender solicitude of a father and a friend, asked of the wicked, " Why will ye die ? why will ye die ?" He has pleaded, He has warned, He has in-

vited ; He still pleads, warns, invites, that this fearful doom may not come upon you. Yet come it will, if you be found among those that refuse to hear Him, and turn away when He calls. And you are doing nothing to prevent it. You can do but one thing that will prevent it. Indifference to danger does not turn danger away, argument does not, cavil does not, ridicule does not, scorn does not, pride of rank, or station, wealth, flattery, accomplishments do not. You may call it "cant" in me to preach about death, but death does come ; you may call it gloom that I speak of the coffin and the grave, but there they are ; you may ridicule the apprehension of the judgment, but there it is ; you may curl the lip, and turn away with scorn, at the mention of hell, but there its fires for ever burn. Ridicule, cavil, scorn, have never saved one human being from the grave, and never will ; scorn, cavil, ridicule, will never save one sinner from destruction. Death is not turned away by contempt, nor are the fires of hell put out by a jibe. Man, standing on the borders of the grave, and about to launch forth on worlds unknown, is in solemn circumstances, and he changes nothing, he diminishes no danger, he puts off no evil, he extinguishes no fires that kindle along his future path, because he can toss his head and laugh at these things, or because he can meet his Maker's communications with scoffs and scorn. "Woe unto you that laugh now ! for ye shall mourn and weep : " "for the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

IV. When these things come, it will be too late to cry for mercy. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

There must be a limit to the calls of religion and mercy ; for life is very brief, and they all lie this side the grave ; and soon the inviting voice of Wisdom will cease to call you, for you will lie in the tomb. Then you will no more hear the voice of wisdom and mercy, that you have here so often disregarded in this sanctuary, or when addressed to you by the friend, or by the Providence and Spirit of God. That voice will, indeed, continue to be addressed to the living, but you will not then be among the living. And there *must* be a limit to these calls from the nature of the case. Can you suppose that God will *for ever* call hardened and incorrigible sinners ? Can you suppose that He will always appeal to the sceptic and the caviller, and bear with his scepticism and cavils through a vast eternity ? Can you suppose that anywhere and everywhere, in all the boundlessness of his future being, the sinner, as he chooses, may pause, and claim the mercy of God ? This cannot be, and *somewhere* there *must* be a limit to the offers of mercy to men ; the termination of the day of grace to the guilty.

That may occur before you shall reach the deathbed, near as that is to you, and short as is the journey thither. Who has said that it may not ? May not the mind become so worldly, and the heart so vain, and the conscience so "seared," and the life so wicked, and the will so obdurate, and the whole soul so utterly shattered and ruined by sin, that conversion shall be hopeless, and ruin certain ? You may be a sinner so hardened, so bold, so daring, so malignant ; you may have been so often called, and yet have refused ; to you God may have so long stretched out the hand, and you may have so disregarded it ; the offers of the Gospel may have been so often made to you, and you may have so often rejected them ; and in such forms you may have been so often near the kingdom, and so often grieved the Spirit of God, that the great matter of

your eternal destiny may be practically settled long before you die ; and all that was designed in your probation may be closed for ever.

It may occur *on* a death-bed. Are there no dying sinners that *seem* to cry for mercy in vain, to whom no response is given, who have no peace in their last moments to show that their cry is heard ? Are there none who then bitterly bewail the follies of a past life ; and who look back with anguish on their violated Sabbaths, and their abused mercies, and on the sins and follies of youth ; and who have no peace as they look forward to a vast eternity ? Do all sinners die peacefully, calmly, with the assurance that their last cry is heard, and that the sins of a long and guilty life are all blotted out as the effect of a momentary cry, though of bitterest anguish, on a bed of death ? Has God anywhere intimated to guilty and hardened men that He *will* hear their cry then, and that they may mock Him, blaspheme Him, and curse Him, and revile Him, may cavil at His claims, and spurn His mercy, and trample on the blood of His Son, and grieve His Spirit, be atheists, and sceptics, and scoffers through a long life ; and then utter a momentary shriek of anguish on a death-bed with no more love for Him than they had in their worst days, and no confidence in the atonement, and no pleading in the name of Jesus ; and suppose that the great account of sin will be cancelled by this ? Why should men believe that ? O ! there are death-beds where there is bitter anguish, and strong crying and tears ; and where there is no hope ; where, though the soul be overwhelmed with remorse, and utter a shriek of anguish, there is no return of peace, as if the cry were heard, and the sinner leaves the world in despair.

And there is a world where the cry of mercy is never heard. If there is not, what is the meaning of our Saviour in the representation that Lazarus was not permitted to go

to the rich man in hell with a drop of water to cool his parched tongue? What is the meaning of the lamentation which sinners are represented as making, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved?" What is the meaning when it is said, "The time is at hand: he which is holy, let him be holy still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still?" What is the meaning of this fact, that in all the revelations which God has made to men respecting the future world, there is no hint that another Saviour will be provided there, that the offers of mercy will be repeated there, that one sinner ever has escaped from those dark regions to the world of light? That which sinners fear, when most filled with alarm, will come upon them; and the world where the cry for mercy is never heard, will be all that it was supposed to be by the sinner in his darkest days of gloom and trembling.

I have gone through with the principal topics in my text, and here I close. I am not anxious to vindicate the sentiments which I have expressed in this discourse; for they are not my own. I have merely given an exposition of a portion of the word of God; and it is not my warning, but His. I have led you step by step in simply expanding the language of the text; and I am sure that no one can say that I have perverted or disguised its meaning. Yet these are solemn truths. I meant that they should appear to be so. I have felt it to be so as I have prepared them. They are truths that are not palatable to the unrenewed heart, to those who love the world, to those who live for gaiety, frivolity, and sin; perhaps, they will not be to you. I did not suppose that they would be palatable; and I could not make them so. They lie across the path of your plans, your wishes, your pleasures. I intended they should. I could not so present the truth of God that it would not. They may make you angry. They have made sinners angry a

thousand times. They have made us, who preach them, angry, when we lived, like you, for pleasure and ambition ; and we have never learned how to exhibit the truth so that it will not make sinners angry. They may make you angry against God, for having revealed such truths. I could not help that, much as I would desire to do it. They may make you feel that this a dark world, that the life of a sinner is dark, that the future is dark and gloomy. I have no way by which I could help that ; for I believe that it is so to a sinner ; and while he remains such, I do not see how it can be otherwise. They may make you hate the preacher ; they may make you turn away from the sanctuary, determined never to enter it again ; they may make you resolved to bestow no further thought on these things, and to give yourself up to sin, and worldliness, and vanity : I could not help that. But how will that relieve the matter ? Does that change the fact that you are to die, that there is a judgment, that there is a vast eternity, that the wicked shall be driven away in his wickedness ? Is not the grave just before you, though you laugh ? Is not the judgment bar, though you treat it with scorn ? Is not God in the heavens, though you lift your arm against Him ?

I beseech you to treat these things as rational beings dealing with realities. You do not mock a father's agony when he dies, or a sister's suffering when she pines away with consumption. You do not laugh when the pestilence walks our streets, turning the faces of men pale, and numbering the gay and the strong with the dead. Treat realities as realities, serious things as serious things, death as death, God as God, eternity as eternity. Are there none here who are willing to do so ? Perhaps there are. " All this," some one among you may be saying to himself, " all this is true. It is true of me. It is a description of

my life. Thus I have been called in a thousand ways and times to be a child of God. Thus I have refused, thus I have disregarded these calls. Thus I have slighted the offers of mercy, thus I have grieved the Spirit, thus I have given myself to the world, regardless of the life to come." Is it so? Is there one who feels thus, and speaks thus? Blessed be God, if there is. Is there in this house an eye that weeps, a heart that is penitent, a sinner who feels that he is guilty before God? Turn, sinner, turn. It is not too late for the penitent; for the relenting heart there still is mercy. God once more calls, once more He stretches out His hand. Though it may be the last call,—for from this house you may go home, and lie down and die,—yet it is enough. It is all *you* want, even should you never hear the sound of the Gospel again. Embrace the call, whether to you it be the last or not, and *your* eternal welfare will be secure. And whether you be weeping or hardened, penitent or impenitent, it *may* be the last. From this sanctuary, my hearer, you *may* go forth to hear the Gospel no more. Death, already having travelled far, may meet you, may give you the fatal stroke, may come to execute his great commission to call you before God. O, it is a solemn thing to hear the Gospel for the last time; to go away where the offer of salvation will never be borne to the ear again!

SERMON XIV.

THE USES AND LESSONS OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

“MY brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: what time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place. The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish. The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.”—Job vi. 15-20.

THE meaning of this passage, as uttered by Job, is that he had been *disappointed*. He was in deep affliction, and had reasonably hoped, when his friends came to him, that they would have comforted him in his sorrows; but all the expectation which he had cherished from that quarter had failed. They had not taken any such view of the causes of his sufferings, or addressed to him any such words of comfort, as would be adapted to cheer his heart, and alleviate his woes. He looked for the language of condolence and compassion, for something to cheer his heart, and to uphold him in his trials; but for this he had looked in vain. This thought he illustrates by one of the most beautiful comparisons ever employed. He had been like weary and thirsty travellers in a desert, who came to the place where they hoped and expected to find water, but who, when they came, found that the streams were dried up, and had vanished away. Those streams were swollen in the rainy seasons, or when the ice dissolved on the mountains; but in other seasons they were absorbed in the

sands of the desert, and left their beds entirely dry. A comparison of a man who thus deceives and disappoints, is common in Arabia; and the comparison would be appreciated nowhere better than there, where the thirsty and weary caravan approaches the place where such streams are supposed to run, or where it had found refreshment formerly, and now finds only a dry bed of stones or of sand. Job speaks of such a caravan; speaks of their hopes and their disappointment: "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed." They had confidently expected to find water there; they came and found none; they were downcast and sad that the waters had failed, and they looked on one another with confusion and dismay; they were ashamed, as if there had been something foolish and wrong in cherishing such expectations,—a feeling which we are all apt to associate with disappointment; and Job represents himself as having such a feeling when he thinks of the vain hope which he had cherished of consolation from these persons, whom he calls his "brethren." Perhaps the meaning of the passage may, after these explanations, be better understood by repeating the text translated a little more literally.

"My brethren are faithless as a brook;
Like the streams of the valley that pass away:
Which are turbid by means of the [melted] ice,
In which the snow is hid [by being dissolved];
In the time when they become warm they evaporate;
When the heat cometh they are dried up from their places;
The channels of their way wind round about.
They go into nothing, and are lost.
The caravans of Tema look;
The travelling companies of Sheba expect to see them;
They are ashamed that they have relied on them;
They come even to the place, and are confounded."

The general subject, therefore, on which I propose to address you, is *disappointment*, its uses and lessons. All afflictions—and disappointment may be regarded as one of the greatest and most common of them, and as in some measure entering into all others—have their own uses, and teach their own lessons; and it is our business, as well as we can, to learn those uses and lessons, and to profit by them. In a world where disappointments so often occur, and may occur, in respect to any hope cherished, or any anticipation entertained, and where they seem so much to be ordered by some presiding power, baffling our schemes and blasting our most fondly cherished and, as we think, our reasonable hopes, it is well to inquire why they occur, and what ends they are designed to answer. As there are few, if any, who have not in some way been disappointed, and none who may not be, the subject will have a practical interest for us all. It will be convenient, in the arrangement of the subject, to notice the forms in which disappointments occur in the world; the reasons why they occur, and the lessons they should teach us; or their uses as a part of a Divine moral administration over human affairs.

I. In the first place, I propose to notice the forms in which they occur.

They are always in reference to some hopes or expectations which we had cherished, and of course may be as numerous as our hopes, or may extend to anything in regard to which we cherished our hope.

There are two uses of *hope*, considered as a mode in which the mind acts, or considered with reference to the arrangements of the Divine government under which we live. One is to stimulate us to exertion by the prospect of some good to be obtained and enjoyed; the other is to be held in the Divine hand as a means of checking, restraining, humbling,

recovering, and controlling us. In the former aspect it is a device superadded to reason and conscience in stimulating us to honourable effort ; in the latter aspect it is held in the hand of God as a means of rebuking us if we are wrong, of humbling us if we are proud, of recalling us to a right path if we go astray, and of turning our thoughts to other objects if we have fixed our expectations on those which would not be for our good.

Considered, as they must be, with reference to the hopes that we cherish, and the plans which we form in life, the disappointments which we meet with may be grouped under certain classes.

1. They are, first, such as relate to the acquisition of property. Perhaps the most universal of all plans that men lay are those which pertain to this : the most general of all desires is the desire to be rich. That the great mass of those who, under free institutions, aim at competence merely are successful need not be doubted ; but the majority of those who form plans for the acquisition of property are by no means satisfied with simply aiming at competence, and are therefore disappointed. They desire not only to have a competence, but to be richer than others ; not merely to obtain enough of this world's goods for their families as to any reasonable demands, and to do good to others, but to "join house to house and field to field, that they may be left alone in the midst of the land ;" seeking wealth with reference to another and quite a distinct object from anything connected with utility,—the *reputation* of being rich. That the great mass of those who, with such ends, seek for property, are destined to be disappointed, no one can doubt. There is not property enough in the world to gratify the rapacious desires of all who thus seek it, and the large prizes are conferred on the few. There is some influence which counteracts the efforts of the mass ; and

while here and there one—whether for his own good or not is another question—obtains the prize, the mass of scramblers for gain go down to the grave, having failed of the object, many of them with much less than they began life with, and many literally applying to themselves the language of one of the richest men of his age: “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither.”

2. Equally subject to disappointment is a second class of persons,—those who aim at distinction in honour and office. The class of those who seek this is less than the former, the proportion of the disappointed is not less. The desire of distinction is one that is deeply seated in our nature, as it is now, and is the perversion of a desire that existed in the bosom of man in a state of innocence, and that will be found in the bosoms of all holy beings. The original desire, as it may exist in the bosoms of angels, as it was implanted in Adam, and as it may attend us hereafter in a high and holy world, is the desire of excellence, of virtue, of the cultivation of our powers, of making as much of ourselves, and of doing as much in the sphere where we are placed, as possible. This is proper; but it is easy to see that when the mind is turned away from original rectitude, and brought under the influence of perverted feelings, it may become quite a different thing. Instead of being a mere desire of excellence in itself, or of the highest cultivation of our powers, it becomes a desire of *excelling others*, and thus becomes the foundation of the hope of distinction, of the aspirings of ambition, and extensively of the wish for office. Perverted, thus it becomes in many, in early life, and characteristically through life, the ruling passion; and, as such, it lays the foundation for envy, and intrigue, and political cabals, and far extended arrangements of doubtful morality to reach the end,—in multitudes of cases, contem-

plating desolation and blood. It is sad to reflect how many of these aspirants have been disappointed, how few have won the prize that they sought. It is humiliating to all thoughts of ambition to reflect in regard to the numberless millions who have lived, in whose bosoms this feeling to a greater or less degree has existed, how few of them have been successful. Of those who have sought to be conquerors and consuls, of those who have sought the prize for eloquence and poetry, of those who have sought for coronets or crowns, of those who struggled at the Olympic and the Isthmian games, of those who have sought the button that distinguishes a high mandarin, or a star to designate a rank of nobility, of those who sought to excel in the use of the chisel in the days of Phidias or the pencil in the days of Rubens, of those who sought to be good farmers or mechanics in the days of Augustus or to be chief among the shepherds of Arcadia, how few are there whose names have reached us, how few who reached the prize in their own days! Of the multitudes in our land who may be now laying their plans to secure to themselves the office of President of the United States, some half-a-dozen successively will reach the prize of the scramblers for that office; now one or two will reach it; and while they occupy it, their disappointed rivals will have passed away.

3. Equally subject to disappointment is a third class,—those who attempt to build up their family name and obtain distinction in their children, either as founders of families, or as training their children for elevation of rank, or science, or talent. There is almost no hope in the bosom of a parent so strong as this, almost none that is so likely to be disappointed, or where an overruling power interposes as He pleases. The rich, the great, princes, nobles, professors, statesmen, are set aside in the distribution of honours of this kind; a blight rests on the efforts to found a family name, or to

gain celebrity in our children; and honours are scattered by a rule that no one can study out. Newton is taken from humble life, and not from a family ambitious of a family name. Luther, a poor and penniless monk, is made to fill a place in the world's history which princes would seek in vain. Shakespeare is the son of a dealer in gloves, Chalmers the son of a petty merchant, Foster the son of a poor weaver, Burns a ploughboy; and where should the test stop? while in the ranks of nobility many an ambitious man has seen his sons grope along beneath mediocrity, or sink into disgrace. Napoleon attempted to perpetuate his name as the founder of a dynasty, and added to all the crimes of ambition and war the crime that makes us weep more than anything that he did,—the divorce of his faithful wife; for there is no blaze of glory that can gild such an act in domestic relations. God frowned upon that wicked act, and the weak and imbecile heir to the most splendid throne of the world sunk in early years undistinguished to the grave, and the name and dynasty is extinct.

The author of *Waverley*, himself truly great in his proper sphere, sought to lay the foundation of an illustrious family, and aimed to perpetuate his name by a title which weaker men seek as their sole distinction; but the title has passed away, and he lives only in his own department,—his works. An ancient prophet saw a man endeavouring to place himself among the great, to lay the foundation for permanent remembrance. He was building for himself and family a splendid sepulchre, as if his situation in an honoured office, which he held, was secure, and his family would long remain after him. God sent the prophet to the man: "Go," said He, "and get thee unto his treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say, What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on

high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock? Behold, the Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee. He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house. And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall He pull thee down." (Isai. xxii. 15-19.) Of all the plans and hopes of men there are few that are more subject to disappointment than those which are founded on the hope of perpetuating a honoured name in a family, or raising a family to eminence. Your children will be rarely what you hoped they would be in your ambitious feelings, when your hopes reached beyond respectability and usefulness; and some boy from a mechanic's shop or a humble farm will bear away the prize which you hoped would be theirs. There are more disappointments that occur in regard to children, than probably arise from any other source. There are more expectations that are not met, more hopes that are blasted by sickness, or death, or inefficiency, or inferiority in any respect; or an evil course often—alas, how often!—disappoints long and tenderly cherished hopes.

4. Equally subject to disappointment is a fourth class,—those who seek for happiness solely in things of this life. I mean, permanent, solid, satisfying happiness. Multitudes seek it, a few profess to find it to an extent that rewards their efforts; the man disappointed in one thing, and at one time, hopes to find it in another. When a child—credulous in believing everything—I ran toward a rainbow, to find the pot of gold, which I was told I would find if I came where it touched the earth; and other children are always doing the same thing. The rainbow recedes. The boy cannot fix it to one place. He comes where its arch seemed to rest on the earth, and now it rests on a spot

equally remote. You run through pelting rain to reach it, but it always recedes. You seek for pleasure in the world, and as the good that your soul needs you will not find it. Here and there one will say, at the close of a ball, that she enjoyed all she hoped; but how many feelings there are which are not expressed there! All who become Christians, say that they never were sure of finding happiness in the world; and Solomon, and Goethe, and Chesterfield, and Malibran, say the same thing of themselves. Never was there a more beautiful image to express this than in my text. The weary and thirsty travellers in the desert come to the place where the streams of water were supposed to run, and haste to slake their thirst. They look, and the bed of the torrent is dried up. "When the heat cometh, they are dried up from their places. The channels of their way wind round about; they go into nothing and are lost. The caravans of Tema look; the travelling companies of Sheba expect to see them; they are ashamed that they have relied on them; they came to the place, and are confounded."

II. I proposed in the second place to consider the reasons of these disappointments. I wish to place myself, and you, in an attitude where we can look at them; and to inquire how it is to be explained that they so often occur, or why so many are in fact disappointed. This part of our subject is not difficult.

1. The first reason is, because the plans and expectations which were formed were beyond any reasonable ground of calculation based on the ordinary course of events, or what ordinarily happens to man. They are not made by taking into view what usually occurs in the course of human affairs. There are many illusions that play upon the minds and around the hearts of men, and no where do they more frequently occur than in regard to the very matter under

consideration. Those illusions arise from several sources. We are either ignorant of, or forgetful of, the usual course of events, and do not take that into our calculation; or we anticipate in the future what does not commonly occur, forgetting how many fail in their expectations, and how few are successful; or we trust in our "star," or our destiny, and suppose that ours is to be an exception to the common lot; or we are merely *presumptuous*, relying on what we suppose is our talent, or something in us that will except us from the common lot of mankind; or we feel that there is a charm around us and our family, and that we must be exempt from the common failures and calamities of the race. The consequence is, that we form our plans with only the slightest impression of the possibility that we shall fail, or be disappointed; and engage in their execution with as sanguine a feeling as if we were certain that they would be all successful. As a law of our nature, it is wise that this should be so, if we would only admit the *possibility* that we may be disappointed, and if we would not murmur when disappointment comes; for life would soon be stagnant, and the hands would droop, and the knees tremble, and the sinews of effort be destroyed, if we either saw what disappointment actually awaits us, or even if fear in regard to the future had as close a correspondence with the reality as hope has, or rather if fear, magnifying anything, took the place which hope now does. Hope goes far beyond the reality in most instances, and gilds the future with bright beams, and makes the unknown more cheerful to us than the present and the known, and draws the thoughts along from the gloomy present to what may be more cheering in time to come. He who made our frame *could* have given to *fear* the place which *hope* now has; and as hope now sheds a cheerful light on the future, so fear might have shrouded all that is to come in gloom. That He

has not done that is to be traced to nothing else than benevolence, to make us happy in the cheerful or the cheerless present, and in any disappointment that may occur to draw our thoughts along to a better world.

2. A second reason why we are disappointed in our hopes is, that our expectations were such as were improper in themselves. They related to things in which we ought not to have cherished hope, to objects in which benevolence to us required that we should be disappointed. We cherished the hope, because we wished our pride to be gratified, or because we secretly supposed we had some claim on God, or because we wished to indulge in some sensual propensity, which it was well should not be gratified; we should have desired nothing better and higher. We have laid plans which are really against our own interests, and which in every point of view were wrong; and we could reasonably expect only that we should come in collision with some law of nature, and impinge on something in the course of events that would demonstrate the error of the course.

3. A third reason may be stated for the fact that we are so often disappointed. It is from the reference of disappointment to our own good. It may not be that the thing hoped for is in itself absolutely wrong, or because, all things considered, there were not enough prospects of success to justify us in forming the plan; but it may be that He who sees all things perceives that success must be perilous to us in every way. What would be the effect on most persons, formed as we are, if everything went on smoothly through life? if every plan were successful? if every hope were realized? if all our plans for gain uniformly turned out well? if our children were all that we hoped they would be? if we found in the gay circle all the joy which we anticipated? if we had as many flatterers

and admirers as we wished? Who can be ignorant of that effect? and who can be ignorant in how much better state one may be in regard to his own best good hereafter, when disappointed, than he might be if he had been entirely and completely successful? The state of mind at the very point when our fairest hopes are blasted, may be a better state, considered with reference to the whole of our existence, than the state of mind at the very moment of highest prosperity. The wealth that we sought, how do we know how much injury it might have done us? into what perilous circles it might have drawn us? what new and dangerous acquaintances it might have led us to seek, or that would have sought us on its account? the bad passions that its possession might have engendered and fostered in the heart? the self-complacency which it might have produced in our bosoms? and the unconcern in the life to come, of which it might have been the cause? There is One that knows us better than we do ourselves, and that can better attemper and arrange in regard to us the things which occur in this present world.

III. I proposed in the third place to notice some of the lessons which disappointments should teach us, or their uses as a part of the Divine moral administration over human affairs. The remarks under this head will be brief, and will constitute all that will be said as an application of the subject.

1. The first which I shall notice will be, that our plans pertaining to this life should all be formed with this possibility in view. I say *possibility*; I do not say with gloomy foreboding. I have already adverted to a wise and benevolent provision in our nature, by which we are much more inclined to look on the bright side of things in the future than the dark side, much more to hope that our *plans* will be successful than to fear that they will fail.

Life is thus rendered cheerful rather than gloomy; for life would be a burden, and we should all sink down to inaction, and should soon pray that Death might hasten his lingering footsteps, if fear had the same place in the economy which hope now has. But while nature prompts us to look with cheerful hope on the future, and while it would be against the laws of our nature and the whole influence of religion to exchange that for gloom, the thoughts to which I have adverted may be allowed to *moderate* our anticipations, and to enter as an element into the formation of our plans, to mellow the too dazzling light by the intermingling of rays less perilous to the vision, and to produce the effect which perhaps time may on a picture, bringing it near to reality. Many whom I now address have experienced disappointments; and the effect should be, and will be, greatly to moderate our expectations from this world in reference to the remainder of our course. A much larger number—for the young always outnumber the aged—are forming their plans and expectations in regard to the future. Nature prompts to cheerfulness and to joy in the hopes which are held out; and the future is redolent of sweets, and glowing with beauty. Flowers springing up in the path, and silvery fountains, and an unclouded sky, and balmy breezes, and sounds of music, and domestic bliss, and returning cargoes protected from storms, and increasing wealth, and the joyous flow of the spirits, and the exulting beating of the heart in the fulfilment of every desire,—these things gild all the future, and make it as bright as a vision of Arabic fancy. But these things may not be; and though gloom and despondency are not what I aim to produce, yet I would produce moderate and chastened desires. Flowers may spring up in the path, but so may thorns; fountains may bubble, and purling streams may run along; but the

streams of brooks may pass away, when the heat cometh ; they may be dried up from their places ; and the caravans of Tema, and the travelling companies of Sheba, be ashamed and confounded, when they come weary and thirsty to find them ; health may fail, and rivals be successful ; the tempests blow when you expected the balmy zephyr ; and there may be the voice of wailing, while the harp shall be laid aside ; and the ship may be stranded ; and the wife that you take to your bosom may grow pale and die ; and the little boy, so bright and so lovely, your hope and joy, may be borne to an early grave, or may live to break your heart. Everything teaches us, and the disappointments which actually occur most effectually, that the expectations which we form respecting this life should be subdued and moderate. If they are any where, there is no doubt they can be derived only from the life to come.

2. A second and a material lesson, therefore, is, that we should form such plans, and cherish such hopes, as will not be subject to disappointment. Those to which I now refer are such as relate to religion, and are founded on that. Those which are based on religion, on the sought favour of God, on the hope of heaven, are the only expectations which are sure not to be disappointed, and not to fail. Others *may* be, indeed, successful ; these certainly *will* be. Around others there can be no certainty of calculation, in this there can be no peril of a failure. He that has a well founded hope of heaven has a permanent security for happiness ; and in whatever else of a subordinate nature he may be disappointed, he will not be in this. This is put beyond the reach of tempests and storms, of fire, famine, and flood, of pestilence and war, of blight and mildew, of the loss of life or health, of the rivalry of competitors and the malice of enemies, beyond any danger of a failure from the want of strength and skill of our own,

or the malignant skill of our foes ; for it is in the hand of a covenant-keeping and a faithful God.

If you ask me, as, perhaps, you would be disposed to, here, What is the *evidence* that there is no disappointment in this? what proofs that the hopes fostered by religion are successful? what demonstration that the Christian actually reaps the reward which religion is supposed to promise?—there is much that could be said in reply. You admit, for you cannot deny it, that all *other* plans and purposes are liable to disappointment. You ask, What is the evidence that this is not also? I have no time to go into an extended reply to this obvious and proper question ; but I will state in a few words what is the *nature* of the evidence on which we rely. There is, then,—

First, the fact that they who become true Christians are *not* disappointed in regard to what religion promises in this life. They often give up much in order to obtain it ; they sacrifice worldly pleasures, they abandon the hopes of earthly distinction, they part with beloved friends ; they turn away from these things, not because they are more unsuccessful than others, or have less brilliant prospects, but because they feel themselves called by their Saviour to seek higher ends and aims ; and they declare, with one voice, that religion has *not* thus far disappointed them, that it has furnished all, in regard to peace of mind, and joy in the prospect of heaven, and support in trial, which it promised. There is,—

Secondly, the fact that, as far as we can trace the influence of religion attending those who leave the world, it does not disappoint them. We have not yet ourselves gone into the dark valley, but we have seen those who have ; and, as far as we can accompany them, or learn their feelings, we have every evidence that religion does not disappoint them there ; that when they come to die it is all

that they ever hoped it would be, in illuminating the dark valley, and shedding a cheerful light on the regions beyond. Why should we not believe that it attends them quite *through* that valley, and meets them, with its rich promised blessing, beyond the "swelling flood?" There is,—

Thirdly, the conviction of the mind itself that religion will not disappoint. Every man feels this, and knows it. Every man is assured that if he had true religion, he would have an unfailing source of consolation; that, wherever else there might be disappointment, there would be none in the happy influences which he would hope from religion on his own soul. And there is,—

Fourthly, the promise of God. That promise is sure, and is an anchor of the soul. There is no promise from heaven of success in an endeavour to gain property; there is none that cheers the scramblers for office; there is none that greets the lovers of pleasure when they enter the theatre and ball-room; there is none which can be a basis of calculation to him who has retired from business, and who seeks to find ease and comfort in old age in worldly gratifications. The only thing of the nature of *promise* that shines on the path of man is that which is found in religion; and as it is a truth which no one can dispute, that the promises of God, in regard to the happy influences of religion, are verified in this life, why should we doubt that they will be in the life to come?

Those, therefore, and there are many, who have felt what disappointment is, in regard to worldly hopes and prospects, Religion invites to herself, with the assurance that she will never disappoint them. She points them to their own lives, reminds them how often they have failed in their own hopes, and seen their fairest prospects blighted; and, in view of all this, she comes to them, and instructs them

that disappointment was suffered to meet them in these things, *in order* that they might be led to seek a better portion for their souls; and she now points them to heaven as to a place where disappointment never comes. Happy would it be if the failures in worldly hopes should lead men to seek that where their hopes will all be fulfilled!

To those who are in earlier life, who have not yet experienced disappointment, or scarcely known what it is, Religion comes, and, placing herself before them, would spare them the pain of bitter disappointment altogether. She would tell them not to form their plans solely or mainly for this life, but to cherish sober and chastened views of what this world can give, or to admit the possibility of a failure in what it promises as an element in their calculation; and, admitting this, to seek the crown that is unfading,—the reward that does not glide away when you seem to have laid your hand upon it. Before hopes fondly cherished shall have been blasted, before a cloud shall come over your bright anticipations, before a cold and withering hand shall be stretched out to palsy what seems now full of hope, seek that which will never be blasted, on which a cold and withering hand shall never be laid, and which, fresh with immortal vigour, shall never be palsied by age, or smitten down in death. Be a sincere and humble Christian; and though you may have trials, you will have learned how to turn away the most cruel edge of disappointment; though you may not be rich, or honoured, or admired, or prospered here, you will be rich in more valued wealth, honoured by those whose esteem is of more value than earthly laurels, admired among the saints as the redeemed of the Lord, and prospered with a prosperity such as shall make the highest success in worldly schemes not worthy to be named.

SERMON XV.

THE BROAD WAY TO DESTRUCTION.

"ENTER ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."—Matt. vii. 13.

THERE was always in the preaching of the Saviour an air of impressive seriousness and earnestness. This characteristic of His preaching is no where more strikingly exhibited than in the account which He gives of men in the text. He sees two paths or ways in which the whole race is travelling to another world. The one is like the thoroughfare of a great city entered through a broad gate, and is the road in which the mass are travelling, though it leads to the destruction of body and soul; the other is like some remote and unfrequented path, to which a narrow gate, difficult of access, conducts, in which there is discerned here and there a lonely traveller. The one is entered as a matter of course, and without effort: it is the way in which men naturally go; they always travel in it, unless they make an effort to shun it, and turn into the narrow and unfrequented path. The other path is narrow: it will be entered only as the result of intention and purpose, and, when entered, the traveller will find himself pursuing his journey almost in solitude. He will have left the crowd, and will henceforward travel on in the little-beaten path nearly alone.

It is this fact, as it thus appeared to the eye of the

Saviour, which will invite the attention of this audience at this time; or rather it is to one aspect of the fact that your attention will be directed,—the view which He had of the dense and crowded way that leads down to death. I shall not go into an argument to show that it is so. The assertion of the Redeemer, and the most cursory glance at the actual condition of the world, constitute all the evidence that is needful of the fact. If a renovated heart, and true repentance, and faith in Christ, and holy living, and prayer, and purity, and love, and religious zeal, and deadness to the world, be the evidence in regard to any one that he is in the path to life, then, compared with those who are in that path, almost no description would give too melancholy an account of the comparative numbers of those who are in the broad way. Instead of attempting to prove that this is so, I purpose merely to call your attention to a few descriptive remarks, to place the fact plainly before the mind.

I. The first is, that these multitudes are in the broad way to destruction by nature. They enter on this path when they are born, and pursue it through the longest life, unless there is a positive resolution to leave it. This seems to be implied in the text, where the Saviour represents it as entered through a "wide gate," and as being the avenue which the multitude take. The other path is narrow, pent up, and is entered only by intention and choice, as implied by the direction of the Saviour,—“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction.” Or, as He elsewhere expresses it, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” It is implied that effort is necessary to find that gate; no such effort is referred to, that men may find the way to death.

The idea, then, is, that to enter on the broad way to destruction requires no deliberate act of choice, no distinct

effort or purpose, no self-denial, no separation from the mass. It requires no sacrifice of natural inclination, no withdrawing from powerful allurements, no subjugation of the passions to the judgment, no separation from the majority of one's friends, no painful difference from the body of our fellow-men by affected or by real singularity. We continue in the same course in which we began life, and we are in that path ; we follow our natural inclinations, and we find ourselves there ; we coincide with the great mass of our friends, and we are there ; we travel on with nearly the whole world, and we are in the broad way to destruction.

We are so placed, in consequence of the apostasy, that we begin life under this disadvantage,—for it is a disadvantage,—and we need not shut our eyes to it. Our first father introduced this wretchedness into our condition, and, by an act of most tremendous guilt, made it certain that the whole race would start on life under this wretched state, that they would be all by nature in the way to death : just as now the intemperate father, by his most wicked conduct, makes it the condition of his sons that they enter on life heirs of poverty, wretchedness, and disgrace. That it is so, as we all begin to live, is indeed a sad fact, and one that makes the greater diligence necessary to secure salvation ; just as the sad hardship of the son of an intemperate father requires in him the greater diligence to raise himself from his low condition to respectability. This great multitude, therefore, of the impenitent, the unbelieving, and the openly wicked, which now throngs the broad way, began life together in this path. Yet, when we look over this great procession, we are struck with one thing. Though they entered on life in the broad way, and though their journey thus far has been in that way, yet the procession is not made up of precisely the same individuals

who began the journey together. Take any group of these travellers, and you will find that important changes have occurred since they entered on the broad way.

1. They have dropped many on the journey,—many who began life as they did, and who, as long as they lived, were in the same broad path. They fell at different distances from the point of starting, in different circumstances, and from different causes; and their fellow-travellers have gone on, and left them. Many of them were as vigorous and healthful, as gay and cheerful, as fond of life and as full of hope, as sanguine in their prospects of future happiness in the present world, and as unprepared to die, as those who now move on among the living.

An immense army moved out of France towards the capital of the empire of the north. It was made up of the heroes of many battles, and of the youthful flower of France. Brilliant plumes nodded, and splendid caparisons glittered, and bright arms reflected the sun-beam, and the war-horse neighed for the battle, and the immense host, with light hearts and exulting feelings, marched on to seize the rich capital of the most extended empire of the earth. They reached that distant capital to see its domes covered with smoke and flames, to find themselves in a forsaken capital in the rigour of a Russian winter. They sought again their own land. But what a scene! Deep snows fell, and little white hillocks were formed where thousands of the youthful chivalry of France were left on the road. The nodding plume was laid low, the gay caparison was hidden from the view; the youthful, cheerful, sanguine aspirant for fame slept,—a stiffened corse,—enclosed in the beautiful winding-sheet which the God of the northern storms had woven for him as he lay down to die. And what a little, miserable remnant of all that brilliant host returned to their homes,—like the little remnant of old men of

each generation who reach the end of life, leaving thousands in their graves on the way !

And you who are now in the broad road to death, how many have you left on your way that began the course as gay, and blithe, and sanguine as you? how many who sported with you in childhood in the green meadow, or where the silvery sound of the rivulet is heard? how many youthful school-mates as cheerful and as thoughtless as you? how many class-mates that looked for future eminence as well as you? how many who, in the brilliant halls in which the gay assemble, have been left by you on the way? They, flushed with hope, and with the promise of long life,—they, flattered and caressed by their friends, real or feigned,—they, forgetful of their God and Saviour, and regardless of death and eternity,—saw with dismay the rose fade on their own cheeks, and gave you the parting hand, as you crowded on in the path of vanity and sin. Along the broad way which you have trod, the monuments set up by affection tell where they lie, thick-strewed almost as the whitened hillocks on the retreat from Moscow.

2. Another portion, also, has left you fewer in number, but more interesting in character, and in the reason why they parted from you. They are the few who have voluntarily turned aside into the narrow path. They saw, or thought they saw, the folly of their course, and yours. They became dissatisfied with the pleasures which the world can give. They began to feel that they were placed here for other purposes. They became impressed with the conviction that this way was beset with dangers. They heard the voice of their Saviour commanding them to leave the broad way, and to “enter in at the strait gate.” They “heard a voice you did not hear,” they “saw a hand you did not see,” and they chose to follow that voice and that hand. They forsook your scenes of plea-

sure and vanity, not because they loved you less, but because they loved their Saviour more; and they are seen now in that narrow way which they find leads to life. They love you still with all the strong attachments of kindred and early friendship, and with the yet stronger feeling which they have from the conviction that you have souls redeemed by precious blood, and that might be happy for ever. Death and the converting power of the Spirit of God have thus thinned out the number with which you started on life in the broad way, and your ranks are not what they once were.

3. Yet they seem not to be diminished in number. The broad way seems as densely crowded as it ever was, as much as it was when the Redeemer of the world looked on it with so much impressive seriousness. The ranks seem still unbroken: the number at any given point seems as great as ever. It is not altogether like the columns of an army, thinned out by wearisome marches, and by cold and hunger, leaving a sad remnant, pale, dispirited, and enfeebled; but it is as dense, as vigorous, and as much flushed with hope, and excited by joyousness, as though none had left them by death, or by a change in their views. The places made vacant by death in the ball-room, from which beauty, and youthfulness, and accomplishment, have been removed, are soon filled up again; the seat occupied in the theatre by a thoughtless daughter of gaiety, now in her grave, is occupied by another as thoughtless; and in the marketplace, and on "exchange," and in the thoroughfares of a great city, no diminution seems to be made in the numbers of those who move in the broad way to death. Another generation comes on the stage of action; and no matter though multitudes reach the termination of their way in the land of death, others come and occupy their places, and the apparently unbroken procession moves forward still.

They who are in the places of worldliness are as worldly ; and they who climb the steeps of ambition are as ambitious ; and they who are in the theatre or the ball-room are as gay ; and they who are in the room of the gambler, or the place of low revelry, are as boisterous, as though the former occupants of those places were not now in their graves, or in hell.

II. My second general remark is, that they who are in the broad way to destruction, pursue that course contrary to the most solemn admonitions, and even the most settled conviction that it is wrong.

There may be some, indeed, who seldom pause to reflect at all on the course ; there may be some whose consciences, never much enlightened, or now "seared as with a hot iron," seldom trouble them ; but the great mass are doing what they know to be wrong, and what they purpose at some future day to abandon. They are pursuing a course of life which they know to be against the law, and the admonitions of their Maker, which will never yield them the happiness which they desire, and which is contrary to the earnest entreaties and the solemn convictions of their friends. I refer now to all who are living in the neglect of religion, whether living in open vice or decent infidelity, whether striving for pleasure, or fame, or gold. Now, in regard to the great multitudes who are thus living, you would find the following things to be indubitably true ; and for the truth of what I am now about to state, I appeal to the consciences and the experience of that portion of my audience whose condition I am endeavouring to describe.

1. Your course of life is against the convictions of your own reason, and judgment, and conscience. You know you ought to love God, and serve Him. You know that the soul is of inestimable value. You know that your great interests are beyond the grave. You know that a

life of gaiety and worldliness has no tendency to prepare you for heaven. You know that one who is soon to die ought to be habitually serious and thoughtful ; that one who is a sinner ought to pray ; that one who has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, ought to live to the honour of his great Benefactor. You know that, however you may silence the rebukes of conscience, it never lifts any approving voice in view of the fact that you live in the neglect of your Maker, and that, however you may love the world, your sober reason and judgment never approve that course. And though you are pursuing this kind of life, and have always pursued it, yet you would not set up a serious vindication of it in a conversation with a friend, or attempt to show that we are wrong when we urge you to leave that way, and walk in the path to life. Of one thing I am always sure : it is that when I urge on my fellow men the claims and obligations of religion, whatever may be the feelings of my hearers, I have their consciences and their sober judgment with me ; and though they refuse to give heed to what I say, and travel on still in the broad road, I am certain that they are turning away from these admonitions, and are treading that path, contrary to the decisions of their reason and their better judgment.

2. Again : you are pursuing a course of life which, if you would express the honest results of your own experience thus far, you would say had been one of disappointment. You are still looking forward to something better ; you have not yet found the prize which you have sought. You have never yet found exactly that satisfaction in wealth which you once supposed you would ; and you dream now, not that it is in the nature of it to satisfy the immortal soul, but that it is because it is not enough. You have never yet found in the pursuits of ambition what you supposed you would ; and you suppose it is now to be found in

some distinction which you have not reached. You have never found the happiness in a life of gaiety which you anticipated. There has been always something to embitter the bliss, or to dash the cup of pleasure to the ground just as it reached the lips, or to leave the heart sad and dispirited.

Solomon made the trial of what the world can furnish to its votaries under advantages such as no man before or since has possessed. He said to his heart, "I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces. I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit." Lord Chesterfield made a similar experiment, and came to the same result. When sixty-six years of age, he said, "I now read Solomon with a sort of sympathetic feeling; I have been as wicked and vain, though not as wise, as he, but am now at last wise enough to attest the truth of his reflection, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Madame Malibran, the most celebrated opera singer of her age, made the same trial, and on returning from a grand aristocratic party given in honour of her burst into a flood of tears. Goethe, perhaps the most celebrated and successful of German authors, who had attained as much in the career of literary ambition as it is possible for man to attain, said of himself in advanced age, "They have called me a child of fortune, nor have I any wish to complain of the course of my life; yet it has been nothing but labour and sorrow, and I may truly say that in seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of

true comfort. It was the constant rolling of a stone that was always to be lifted anew." These are honest testimonies of what can be found in the pursuit of the pleasures and honours of this world. And probably I do not now address one—or, if I do, this is a very rare instance—who would say in the frankness of his soul, that any plan which he has formed of ambition, or wealth, or pleasure, has been entirely free from disappointment. "The beginning of the end" is not seen, and disappointment, with a melancholy train of woes, may be at your very doors. The votaries of the world whom I now address,—and it is so all over the earth,—are a disappointed, discontented, jaded race, reaching forth still for that which they have never yet found, and, like a blindfolded man, stretching out their hands to seize on something which continually eludes their grasp.

3. Again: your course is not only against conscience and reason, and the result of your own experience; it is against the admonitions of the best friends that God has given you, living or dead. It is against friendly counsels and warnings, often uttered in your ears, and borne often to your hearts, with all the circumstances that can entitle advice to respect, and give solemnity to warning. The best friend you ever had on earth was Jesus Christ; and His admonitions about this course were as unambiguous as truth and sincerity could make them, as tender as dying love could cause them to be, and as solemn as a voice from eternity. The next best friend may have been a Christian father or mother; and they have repeated the admonitions of the Saviour, and urged them with all the tenderness and authority, justified by their relation to you. The bosom companion, the pastor, the Sabbath-school teacher, nay, the stranger, may have repeated and prolonged the voice of warning and entreaty. When you come into this

place, the voice of the living minister admonishes you of the guilt and error of your way ; in solitude, when you look into the chambers of your own soul, the voice within prolongs the admonition ; and when you go where the dead repose in the land of silence, a voice comes from the grave of the friend that sleeps there, admonishing you by all the remembered influence of his example, and of his dying counsels, to leave the broad way, and seek out the narrow path that leads to life.

4. Once more : you are pursuing this path when you yourself intend yet to forsake it, and find the narrower way. You do not design to tread on with the throng until you reach destruction. You do not mean that death shall come and find you in that path. You would be unwilling to have the minister of religion declare at your funeral that, according to all the evidence which you had furnished, you had through life been in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. You would be unwilling that such a record should be made on the stone, rude or splendid, that shall cover your grave. You mean to leave this path ; and somewhere before you die, you intend to give occasion to your friends to say that there was evidence that you chose the way to life. For the truth of these representations I appeal to yourselves. Would you be willing, when your pastor shall be called to attend you to the grave, in that solemn hour, when the eyes of the living look upon you for the last time, and when they are about to turn away from you for ever, that he should say that you lived for gaiety, for gain, for pleasure, and that through all your life you neglected religion ? Would you be willing that this fact should be recorded on the stone that shall mark your grave, although inscribed on the purest marble, and encircled and wreathed with the finest decorations of the chisel ? Would you wish that Christian friendship should never be able to

find, in all your life, one thing to dry up the tears of grief in the evidence that you left that path for the narrower one which leadeth unto life? Your own hearts will answer these questions, though the lips may be dumb. And if these things are so, if this course is pursued against your conscience and better judgment, against the admonitions of your friends, when it has only as yet yielded disappointment, and when you yourself purpose to leave it, then there must be some cause for a fact so remarkable, and that is so contrary to the usual principles on which men act. And this leads me to

III. A third general topic of remark. It relates to the inquiry, why, in these circumstances, this path is pursued. How are they who are in it sustained so as to make life comfortable, when thus habitually acting against the convictions of their own consciences and the admonitions of their sober judgment? How do they silence the voice of God and of their friends? How, when their ranks are broken in upon by death, do they turn aside the admonition, and continue to live on as thoughtless as they did before? What is it that keeps them in countenance, and preserves cheerfulness, and animation, and mirthfulness, in the dense throng, pressing on, amidst the dying and the dead, to hell? Why do they not follow their better judgment, and choose the path to life? The grand answer to these inquiries is, undoubtedly, to be found in the disrelish of the heart for religion; but this is not the answer which I design to dwell upon. I will suggest two or three subordinate causes.

1. One is the very fact that there is such a multitude in that broad way. They sustain and countenance each other; for men often almost thoughtlessly do that which many others do, though no consideration would induce them to act thus if they were alone. Young men congregated for wicked purposes often go much further into the depths of

guilt than any one of them, even the bold leader, would have dared if alone, or than any one of them ever contemplated. The mere fact of numbers, therefore, in favour of irreligion, is a strong and ever-acting reason on many minds for remaining in a course which neither their conscience nor their sober judgment would justify, and which they themselves design at some period to forsake. When there are so many, they suppose there cannot be essential wrong or real danger. Any one of these, almost, if alone, you could convince of the folly and danger of the course; but how can you separate an individual from the multitude of the gay in the ball-room, in the theatre, in the marts of business, or in the thoroughfares of a great city, so as to get these thoughts before his mind? If from that great procession in the way to destruction you could take out any one, and lead him aside, and sit down with him in some retired grove, or by a running stream, you might so lay these thoughts before him that he would see their force. You could convince him that crime is no less crime because practised by numbers, that irreligion does not change its nature because the multitude is irreligious, that personal responsibility is not lessened by the aggregation of guilt, and that the danger of ruin is not the less because there are multitudes which no man can number in the way to death. You could convince him that there is no hope of making any impression on God by the strength of any criminal organization, and no prospect of wresting the bolt of justice from His hand by combination; for, "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." But how will you get these thoughts before the mind amidst the throngs of the guilty and the gay, when surrounded by multitudes all pressing on in the way to death? They sustain and give countenance to each other; and no matter what may be the particular form of wicked living which one may pursue, he

sustains every other one, whether practising the same form of sin, or indulging in any other. Each infidel sustains every other infidel, each profane swearer every other one, each worldly man every other one, and every daughter of gaiety is not only herself a traveller to destruction, but countenances every other one in the same way, and becomes her guide down to hell. And not only so. These patrons of guilt, though in different forms, lend a reciprocal influence, and become brothers in iniquity and in danger. Cicero said there was a "common bond" of brotherhood among the virtues, and with equal truth it may be said there is among the vices. Every neglecter of God in any form, sustains and patronizes the neglecter of God in every other form. Every man who does not walk in the way to life gives countenance to every one that does walk in the way to death. The decent and moral neglecter of religion, therefore, becomes the associate with and the patron of the most profligated and abandoned in that broad way, serves to keep him in countenance, prevents his reflecting on the importance of religion, and helps him in the road to death. The mingled mass of the virtuous and the vicious, of the refined and the coarse, of the urbane and the vulgar, of the intelligent and the ignorant, of the principled and the unprincipled, of those who walk in silk and of those who walk in rags, abet and sustain each other in their alienation from God, and crowd each other onward in the path to hell.

2. Again: the mass are sustained in their course by the respectability of many who are their companions. The general characteristic of those in the broad way is, that they are neglecters of God and of religion; they have not sought out and found the narrow path to life. It is not that they are all avowed infidels and atheists; for it is not so. It is not that they are all scoffers and profligates; for this is

not so. It is not that they are all profane, and grossly sensual; for that is not so. It is not that they are all murderers of fathers, or murderers of mothers, or manslayers, or perjured persons; for that is not true. The single essential characteristic is, that they have no religion. In this they are alike, in everything else they may be very unlike. There are among them the very bad, the profligate, the vile; but there are also the intelligent, the amiable, the moral. Now, to a great extent, the one class is sustained by the respectability, the age, the amiableness, the standing in society, of the others. If all who were in the broad way were vile to human view, there are multitudes who would avoid such a path. But I will tell you what is the real difficulty in the case, and what it is that turns aside the force of our appeals, when we come to men, and urge them to walk in the path to life. True, as I have already said, there are, in the ranks of these who are in the broad way, the vile, the polluted, the abandoned, without number. True, all those who walk in that way must expect to be associated in the eye of God, whatever may be their own personal respectability, with the most profligate of the species; for this is the law, from necessity of their association. The father that takes his daughters to a theatre must expect that they will be associated in the amusements of the evening, in the same house, with the most abandoned of either sex; with those whom on no account he would admit over the threshold of his own dwelling. But this is the inevitable law of such amusements, and of all participation in sin, no matter how you disguise it. But the difficulty in the case to which I refer is this: it is, that the neglecters of religion of all grades and classes, the world over, are countenanced and sustained by the intelligent, the honoured, the amiable, the aged, the wise, the refined. We *make an appeal* to the young. But how can we hope to

prevail with them to walk in the narrow path, when a father, to whom they have always looked to show them what is right, or a mother, is in the broad way? We denounce profaneness. How can we hope to prevail with young men to avoid it, when men in office, in the learned professions, in the halls of legislation, practise it? We speak of the dangers of theatrical amusements. How can we hope to guard the multitude of any class from those dangers, when the refined and the virtuous and the candidates for high offices are there? We speak to men of the evils of intemperance. How can we hope to prevail, when the rich and the honoured rise up early to mingle strong drink, or continue until night, until wine inflames them? We speak of the seductive influences of the ball-room, of the danger to the soul of a species of amusement in which all seriousness and prayer are excluded. But how shall we hope to prevail? how can we prevail in inducing the young to choose the narrow path, when parents, and, alas! professedly Christian parents, become the patrons of such amusements, and lead forth their little ones like a flock, that their children may dance? And so, in all amusements, all dangerous forms of unbelief, all doctrines and practices that peril the soul, all vices too, even those which strike most deeply at the heart of virtue, and make the damnation of the soul most certain. All vices and forms of evil have their patrons among the rich, the great, the intelligent, the honoured; and is it any wonder that the multitude in the broad way are sustained in their course, even when acting against the dictates of their own conscience and all the warnings of their Maker?

3. Once more: they are kept in the way to death by things that are designed to turn their mind away from the reality of their condition, and conceal their real danger. I allude to all that is employed to gild odious vices, to cover

up sin and moral deformity, to call evil good, and good evil; to fix the eye on the unreal and the evanescent, and to turn it away from the real and the permanent. Look into the gay world. Turn the eyes on that passion for external adorning; contemplate the brilliant lights and dazzling splendour there; think how much there is in "society," technically so called, that is designed to turn the mind away from the realities of religion, from the cross, from the place of prayer, from the thoughts of death, and of eternal judgment. Here, though the way "leadeth unto destruction," everything appears "brilliant and fair; it resounds with hilarity, music, and songs; it contains thousands of the opulent, the fashionable, and the gay; vice is clad in splendour, and a spirit reigns which knows no law but inclination, and recognises no god but pleasure." For this class distant climes pour in their luxuries, magnificent halls open their doors, splendid mansions rise, art is exhausted, and the cup of vanity is drunk deep and long, and music lavishes its charms, to give pleasure to the ear and joy to the heart. And all for what? What they would say might be one thing; what would be said by that master spirit that reigns in this world of splendour might be another thing; and what might be said by Christ might be still another thing. It is to conceal the reality of their condition, to hide the truth about their own hearts, to turn aside the mind from the contemplation of death, to keep up their spirits, and fill them with thoughtless mirth as they move on in the broad way that leadeth to destruction.

IV. I have but one more general remark to make, the fourth, in illustrating the text. It is that, whoever may be travelling in that way, however great their numbers, or various their characters, it has but one termination; it "leadeth to destruction." I shall not pause to demon-

strate that what the Saviour so solemnly said is true. It "leadeth to destruction." It conducts, not to a Moham-
medan paradise, not to Elysian fields, such as were dreamed
of in classic poetry, not to abodes of literature and re-
finement, where the learned and polished in manners hope
to be congregated together, not to the blissful seats to
which patriots and statesmen, and the rich and great, are
consigned by eulogists, and epitaphs, and friends: it leads
to destruction. So He spake who is to come in the clouds
of heaven to decide the destiny of mankind; and thither
this broad way certainly leads, with no paths that branch off
to other abodes, and no turning in the vast distance that
will unite it with the narrow path to life. To us its end is
concealed. The tremendous precipice, down which the
sinner sinks to the fiery gulf, is hidden from our view.
The fire beneath the smoke that ascends, the cry of wailing
and of horror of those who descend into that fiery abyss, are
all concealed from us; else the woes and horrors of the earth
would not be unlike the sad world itself, to which the mul-
titudes are hastening. Yet the reality is not the less sad
and awful. Conceive of a tremendous precipice. At its
base there rolls, day and night, an ocean of liquid fire. To
the edge of that crater an iron way has been laid down; and
on that road, yet far distant, are cars, loaded with the gay,
the cheerful, the fascinating, the accomplished. Thought-
less and mirthful, they are borne on with tremendous
speed. No fire is seen, no smoke is discovered ascend-
ing, no danger is apprehended. Suddenly, the dreadful
gulf yawns before them. Heaven now have mercy, for
who shall stay their flight? A moment more, they dash
over the brink, and, amidst shrieks and cries, they die.
They saw their danger on that way too late. Thus,
on a road whose termination you do not see, rushes the
thoughtless multitude down to destruction. Too late for

you, my friends, the warning may come ; for your eyes may be open to your condition only when on the fiery brink. Now you might leave that way for the narrower, less frequented, and to you less attractive path, that leads to the skies. Before another warning falls on the ear, you may have rushed down the fiery steep to be engulfed for ever.

SERMON XVI.

THE WISE RECKONING OF TIME.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—Psalm xc. 12.

At what time can this prayer be more appropriate than at the commencement of a new year? Another year of our probation has gone. Its joys and sorrows, its plans and purposes, have passed away, and live now only in the recollection and in the influence which they have had in forming our character, and in determining our destiny in the great day of accounts. We enter, now, upon a new year, uncertain what joys or sorrows it has in reserve for us, what trials we shall pass through, who of us shall die, who shall see its close in the same circumstances of joyousness with which we greet the first Sabbath of this year. How obviously proper, in these circumstances, as we stand thus upon its threshold, to lift up the voice of supplication, and say to God, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

The meaning of the prayer is not difficult to understand. It is that God would teach us to take such an estimate of life that we may be led to act *as if we saw its close*; *as if we saw the number of days that we are to live*. We know not how long our lives are to continue. We have no intimation, no means of conjecturing, when they will close. For wise and not unobvious reasons, God has concealed the end of life from us. He *could* have revealed to each one of us, as He did to Hezekiah, (Isai. xxxviii.,) the number of years

that we shall live ; or, He could say, to those of us whom He has appointed this year to death, as He did to Haniah, "This year thou shalt die." (Jer. xxviii. 16.) But He has concealed the close of our lives from us, probably for these reasons : either, 1. Because, if sinners knew the exact hour when they were to die, they would defer preparation to the last day or hour, knowing that they would have time then to attend it ; or, 2. Because, if men knew the exact time when they were to die, the world would be filled with gloom, and our houses become like the cells of condemned malefactors : for what would be the effect on the families that compose this congregation to understand precisely the names of those among us who are to die this year ? What sadness would be in our dwellings, as we looked upon the child, dear to us, destined to death, as the day drew near ! Or, 3. Because the kind of uncertainty which now hangs over the awful subject is best adapted to lead us, without delay, to prepare for our departure. The two settled things are all that is needful for us : first, the event is not far distant ; and, second, it *may* occur at any year, any month, any hour. The Giver of Life, and the Closer of Life, knows when the hour will be. He, too, by the secret influence of His Spirit, can enable us to act *as if* we saw the close of life. He can enable us to take an account of our own days, and form plans in reference to our own lives, *as if* we saw the close. Such is the prayer in the text. Who will refuse to offer it sincerely this morning ? Who, among us, can refuse to ask of God that our hearts may be applied to true wisdom ? In secret silence my heart breathes forth this prayer to God now, as we enter on the consideration of the subject before us.

What would be the answer to this prayer, if it were answered ? What views of life would it enable us to take ? What plans would it lead us to form ? These questions will

direct our meditations, and in a series of observations I shall aim to answer them.

I. We should obtain a practical view of life as exceedingly short. Such a view was obtained by the author of this psalm; and it was in part the reason why he offered this prayer, that he might have a practical view of a fact of which he could not doubt. "In the morning," speaking of men, he says, "they are like grass which groweth up: in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." It is not difficult for us to come to the conclusion, intellectually, that life is not very long at best, and that our own lives are not likely to be any exception to the general law. We would state this fact in an argument with another man, to convince *him* that it was proper to contemplate the probable close of life at no distant period, and to prepare for it; or we would admit it in conversation with a friend. Yet, as a practical and *felt* matter, how rare is it that it secures a hold on the mind! All of us insensibly fall into the habit of forming our plans, *as if* we had some security against death, and *as if* we were to escape the lot which befalls others. *I* suffer such a delusion to occupy *my* mind, you do yours. I, though I see ministers of my own age, or younger than myself, cut down in the midst of their way, and those who had as fair a prospect of long life as I have, suddenly laid in the grave, insensibly find myself supposing that I may be an exception, and forming plans that will require many years to fill them up. The merchant, too, though he sees another merchant taken away before his plans of life are executed, may insensibly find himself anticipating many years, and scarcely feel that it is possible that he should be

called to leave his own plans unfinished. The youth, too, even when he follows a fellow youth to the grave, may find himself insensibly forming plans that are to stretch on to an honoured old age, as though no such casualty could happen to him. And even they who seem to us to be "very aged men," may be seen to be forming schemes that would require no inconsiderable part of the time allowed to the venerable Methuselah to accomplish. Men build houses, and buy farms, and make investments, and plant orchards, and send their ships to distant lands, and draw around them in their dwellings all the comforts that this or other climes can furnish, *as if* life were wholly a different thing from what it is, and were made of far less perishable and frail "stuff" than it actually is. It is not against these things that I now reason or remonstrate, but against the illusion which insensibly comes on your mind and mine in regard to the actual period to which we are likely to live. The prayer of our text, if answered, would dissipate this illusion; and it would be well for us if, at the commencement of the new year, at least, this illusion were dissipated. Now we form our plans anew. We make an estimate of our profits and losses, of what others owe to us or we to them, of the value of our funds, and of our ability to extend our business, or of the necessity of contracting it, and of limiting our expenses; of the kind of hitherto untasted luxuries in which we may now safely indulge, or of the necessity of substituting economy in the place of extravagance. Let us, to-day, admit as an important item, in forming our plans for this year, a just estimate of life; and see what influence that should have on our views of living, and our engagements for the year.

The simple matter of fact is, that life is short, that it is uncertain, that death has his victims every day, that he comes into every place, that he shows no favouritism for

any class, that he gives no indulgence to the young, the fair, the beautiful, the vigorous, and that he is wholly inexorable to all the pleadings which men make for a longer life who are not ready to die. It *is* short, it *is* a hand-breadth, it *is* a vapour, it *is* like a weaver's shuttle. Some may ask, *why* it is so short. Why, since so great interests are at stake, is it not longer? Why does God make eternity depend on the conduct of a few hours? I would answer these questions now only so far as they illustrate my text and contribute to my object. You complain of its being so short as a part of probation. Let me say to such complainers, 1. That you do not desire that life should be longer *in order* to prepare for eternity. That is not the object for which you wish to live. You wish to live to enjoy the pleasures of this world, not to prepare for the next. 2. Life *is* long enough to prepare for eternity. "That life is long which answers life's great end." Ample time is given to each one to prepare to meet God. You feel that you are squandering large portions of life, supposing that there is enough left to prepare to die. Can a man who has lived fifty years say that his life has been too short to repent of his sins, and believe in the Saviour? It requires little time to prepare for heaven. It requires much, indeed, to amass wealth, to obtain honour, to transmit the name to future times; but there is no one here who has not had ample time to prepare for heaven. 3. It is merciful to *you* that time is thus short. Were it *not* so, you would defer the preparation for heaven as long as possible, and would live a life of sin, and harden yourself in impenitence as you advanced in years. What would be the condition of the world if all men lived to be as old as they who lived before the flood? Just what theirs was; for among them who became penitent? See aged sinners now hardening themselves as they advance in years. Who

among them becomes converted? And should the race live on as it did then, the earth, as it was then, would be filled again with violence, and make it necessary to sweep it again by fire or flood for its crimes. 4. It is in mercy to the race that life is short. Long enough to accomplish the work of salvation, and to allow much time, too, for social comforts, for the study of the works and ways of God; it is too short for one man to accumulate the wealth of provinces, and place himself alone in the earth; for he is cast off, and his property is placed in better hands. It is too short for such a man as Alexander or Napoleon to establish a universal iron despotism, and bind all the limbs of men with fetters; for before the giant evil is done God calls him to his great account, and men breathe again, and are free. And it is too short for men to combine and execute purposes of infidelity and sin; for death breaks up the circle and dissolves the confederacy; and it is in mercy now to you and me, to society, to truth, to virtue, to liberty, and salvation, that life is a span. But it is not too short for one and all to secure their eternal salvation if they will. Let us take such an estimate of life as we enter on the new year.

II. Should this prayer be answered, we should obtain a view of our fast-fleeting days and years *as a precious part of probation*. Now we are incessantly prone to forget it, and to regard time as given to us for any other purpose than to prepare for eternity. It is regarded as given for gain, amusement, ease, pleasure, sensual gratification, for dress, for eating, and for securing the good opinion of our fellow men.

When a man performs a single thing, no matter how unimportant in itself, with a distinct reference to eternity, and as a part of probation, it constitutes a new era in his life, and makes him a different being. It takes him out from the common mass of mankind, and the great and noble conception will diffuse an influence over all his conduct and

life. For there are many—nay, it is the common condition of mankind—who have never spent one half-hour in their lives in acting with any direct reference to the world to come: nay, who have never given the subject a moment of practical thought. They have spent many hours in preparing for a ball-room or a fashionable party, in preparing for a profession or an office, in preparing to live in ease when the snows of age shall fall gently on their heads, but not one single half-hour in any distinct and direct purpose to prepare for eternity. Now, should this plan become the leading plan of their lives, or should it occupy their attention in any manner as they are occupied in preparing for future life in this world, it would produce a change that would show itself in all their purposes and actions. It would be the salient point of a new life in their souls, and would diffuse its influence over all their plans. Such a view would be obtained if the prayer of my text were sincerely offered, and if an answer were imparted. Our passing years, then, would be seen to be an important part of the probation for eternity; a part of existence whose plans and actions would leave their impression on all the future, being given with reference to a coming world, and invaluable above all the worth of rubies, as connected with our escaping the woes of hell and reaping the joys of heaven. They would be seen to be given not for ease and enjoyment here, not for purposes of gain and ambition, but to be well filled up with reference to the world to come. That life is well spent where the steady aim is eternity; that is worse than wasted which falls short of that high and holy purpose.

I need not stay to demonstrate that this is a world of probation; and that he has no just view of life who does not thus regard it. The Bible has spoken unequivocally on that point, and leaves no room to doubt that it is so

regarded by its great Author ; and the whole train of events on earth leads us to the conclusion that God so designed it. Youth sends an influence forward to determine the condition of manhood ; and the virtues and industry of youth are rewarded by the respectability and wealth of middle age, as the vices of youth are recompensed by poverty and dishonour. Middle age sends an influence forward to advanced years ; and one point of time is perpetually determining the destiny in that which is to come. The results of the transactions of yesterday travel over the night when we sleep, and meet us to-day, just as the result of conduct in this world travels over the sleep of death with us, our solitary companion, and meets us in the regions beyond, to determine our destiny there. I know no truth that more commends itself to the common sense of mankind, and that more accords with the uniform course of events, than that we are on probation for eternity. If so, a year has a value which words cannot estimate ; and to us, now, it is an important inquiry, What has been the bearing of the past year on our eternal doom ? What results of that year are to meet us when we shall emerge from the vale of death ? And it is an inquiry not less important, What are to be the results of the year, whose first Sabbath this day dawns upon us ?

I am not satisfied, however, with this general statement of the doctrine of probation. The probation or trial on which we are placed here, is as peculiar as it is important. The question to be determined is a very simple one, and turns mainly on a single point, as probation always does. With man in Paradise, it was a simple question whether he would abstain from the forbidden tree. With a young man now, the whole trial often consists in the question whether he will *once* resist the solicitations of appetite and of friends,—so thought and so called,—about the intoxi-

cating cup, or the solicitations of curiosity, or of friends, or a worse motive, to visit a gambling room, or a theatre. So the trial for eternity is narrowed down to a single question, simple in its nature, but determining all the future doom. It is, whether you will or will not accept of pardon and salvation through the merits of the Redeemer. That is the question before man; not whether he will abstain from the forbidden tree, for that is not now proposed; not whether we shall be saved by a life of perfect holiness, and go to heaven because we have never sinned, for that is equally out of the question: but whether, conscious of guilt, humbled, rebuked in spirit, penitent that we are among the unhappy wanderers from God our Maker, we will return, and seek forgiveness through the merits of Him who died for us. This is the great and important question that is to be determined. To determine this, God gives us life. To one He gives eighty years, to another threescore and ten, to others fifty, forty, thirty, twenty,—to all enough, and yet to all little enough; to all the time is uncertain; and yet, to all the present is available and ample; and to all this time is soon to pass away; for not one moment is to be allowed for *that* purpose beyond the grave. Permit me to add, my hearers, that much light is thrown on the solution of that question by the past year. That year is gone; and to you who are now impenitent, the purposes for which God gave you the year have been in no manner answered. It has been to you worse than a wasted year,—a year of the positive rejection of the Son of God; and rather than have been doing that, a man had better have been in his grave.

III. Should the prayer in my text be offered and answered, we should be led to act as if life were soon to close. I have already intimated that few of us act so now. We delude ourselves with a vain expectation of long life,

and we are glad to have this illusion play around the heart ; for who is there that on some points does not like to be deceived ? *Now* we form our plans as if we had much time yet to live ; could we see the truth, we should be led to act as if we saw that we were soon to die. This is true of all in a general sense ; in respect to some here, it would be found to be true in a peculiar and most affecting sense.

It is true of all. I bring it to you not as a new, but as a very weighty and important, truth, that the period is not far distant when *all* that I now address, all in this city, rich and poor ; all in this land, free and bond ; all on earth, holy and unholy,—will be in their graves ; all gone ; all silent ; all returning to dust ; all forgotten. Your seat in this house will be vacated, and a new comer will sit there ; your seat at the table in your dwelling will be vacant ; your well-known tread and voice will be heard there, by your wife and children, no more : and the chamber, where you now sleep, will be darkened and still ; for you, pale and speechless, will lie there dead. The man almost without feeling will thrust his spade in the earth, and ply his solitary task in the grave-yard to make another bed for you ; and you will soon be forgotten. Few will weep over you, and soon their tears will be dried up ; and they will all lay aside the badges of grief ; and the footsteps of your being will be obliterated, as the ebbing and flowing waves remove the footprint on the beach. I attend many funerals, and I endeavour to be not an inattentive observer of what occurs there ; and to derive, from all such places, lessons that may be of practical value. I have been a man of ambition, far more than my sober reflections can justify ; and have had a desire that my name should be remembered when I am dead ; yet, though *I cannot* justify it, I know not that it has been a more

ardent desire than is cherished by many other men. But I confess, if there is anything that serves effectually to rebuke and mortify this passion, to show me how little likely it is to be gratified, and to convince me how vain and worthless and foolish it is, it is what I see at funerals, and in the remembrances of the dead. How narrow is the circle that is affected at all ! How little sense of *loss* is felt extensively when a man dies ! How much is it regarded as a matter of course that *he should die !* and in what a cold, *business manner* is he consigned to the grave ! How soon is his place filled up, if a pastor, by another pastor, equally or more beloved ; if a judge on the bench, by another, perhaps long an aspirant for the office ; if a physician or a lawyer, by one who enters without a tear into the large practice for which he has been waiting long ; if a merchant, by one who stood at his elbow, waiting that he might be removed ! The world will have other things to do than to think much of us when we are dead ; and when we have received the tribute of the small circle of personal friends that we have been able to draw round us ; and, perhaps, the passing remark of the stranger on what he may have heard of our worth, we must content ourselves to be forgotten. Happy, then, they who, though destined to be soon forgotten on earth, will have the assurance that there is One who will remember them, even in the grave.

But the truth that life will soon close is more *especially* true of some. There are individuals here, of which number perhaps I am one, who are particularly concerned in this remark. A year since I addressed some here who are not present to hear me to-day, and who will hear the voice of pastor or friend no more. To-day, I address some who will not be where they may hear the Gospel at the close of this year, and of whom it is written by Him who changes not, "This year thou shalt die." I say I address some

such. This fact has all the certainty which any future event *can* have, and is nearly as certain as it is that the sun will rise to-morrow. If I live, I as certainly expect to be called on to attend funerals this year as I do that the months and weeks will roll round. Who are the victims I know not; I do not wish to know. Two things I know with tolerable certainty, however. One is, that they will be very likely to be taken from those who are least expecting it; and that probably some of these dear youth will be the victim: and the other is, that so far as we can see, they are as likely to be taken from one of these pews as another. Suppose I begin on the right, and take the pew nearest to me, and then the next, and the next, and the next: I would say to those sitting there, that it is as likely that the breach will be made there as anywhere. Of those that sit there to-day, then, how natural to ask the question, "Are you ready?" God can teach those of us who are thus destined to death, to act as though *we* saw it; to apply our hearts to wisdom, as though *we* saw the day and the hour of our departure.

IV. Were this prayer answered, it would lead to the change of many plans which we are now forming, and which are far from the wisdom which would be suggested by the proper numbering of our days. It is not unreasonable to suppose that many of the plans which are formed by those before me, at the commencement of the year, are not based on any supposition that death is near, or, perhaps, that he approaches at all. They would be essentially modified, perhaps wholly abandoned, were the truth of the whole matter clearly seen. Suppose you were to see the future just as God sees it; suppose you were able to calculate with certainty the months, the weeks, the hours, the moments, the very *seconds* that you are to live: it is fair *to presume* that such an estimate would lead many here

essentially to modify their plans at the commencement of this year. He who has begun the year flushed with the hopes of gain, and with cheering prospects of better times, intent now more than ever on being rich, would perceive the propriety of paying attention to the concerns of the soul. He might remember the solemn address made to one man, "Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee;" and feel it necessary greatly to modify his plans, and to make the preparation for that hour now the primary purpose. That professing Christian, now mingling much more freely than the Saviour would have done, or would now approve, with the world of fashion and of levity,—the world that knows not its God, and desires not a Redeemer,—might feel that there would be a propriety in withdrawing from such scenes, and giving the heart to godliness, and seriousness, and prayer; and might see the propriety that one expecting soon to be with the redeemed above, should have the heart better prepared than it is likely to be where God is forgotten. That young man who is full of the hope of distinction in this world, but without the prospect of honour in the world to come, and that has resolved to push forward his efforts with augmented ardour this year, in pursuit of the prize, might feel that it was necessary to grasp a prize that is nearer and brighter,—the crown of glory,—and to make immediate preparation for the honours of heaven. And she who expects to devote herself to vanity, might feel that there was some impropriety in dancing over the earth which is so soon to be opened to furnish her a grave, and that as she treads near the crumbling verge, a more careful and sedate step becomes her. What a change would be produced in our plans to-day if we saw the reality! Who is there here who would not be likely to modify his schemes? How many are there who would feel it necessary to form them

wholly anew! *God* can so influence the mind, that we shall form our plans *as if* we saw all before us: and who *could* be injured by sincerely offering that prayer at the beginning of this new year?

V. Such an answer to the prayer would show the propriety of an immediate attention to whatever is necessary to prepare to die. *To die!*—dreaded, repulsive, chilling word. I know you will think of it as little as you can; but I know also that the time is not far distant when it *must* be thought of; and I know too, that, by the help of the Almighty Spirit, I could show you how that word should lose almost all its terrors, perhaps become a subject of delightful contemplation. Pleasant or unpleasant, however, it is a word and thing that pertains to you and me, and we are equally interested in knowing what is a proper preparation for it. I am drawing near to the close of my remarks, and I would finish what I have to say by pressing this point on your attention. What is to be done? How?

With some of you, my hearers, everything is to be done. To this day, in some instances, in a life already somewhat protracted, you have done literally *nothing* to prepare for the eternity which is before you. The past year is now numbered with those that went before it, characterized in your case by the total neglect of the soul. In all that year, in all your past life, you cannot fix the eye on one half-hour when you sat down to think soberly about eternity, when you read the Bible one half-hour, to find out the way of salvation, when you prayed a half-hour that your soul might be saved. Momentary thoughts, dismissed as soon as they could be, you have had, perhaps hours of gloom, which you have been anxious to conceal from your friends; you have had seriousness, you have experienced grief on the death of a child; but your main anxiety *then* has not been how those thoughts might take a reli-

gious direction, and result in your conversion, but how they might *not*. Solemn feelings you may have had, under the preaching of the Gospel; but the solicitude excited in your bosom has not been how they might result in your conversion, but how you could best get rid of the thoughts that troubled you. I have reasons, which thoroughly convince me of the fact, to believe that I address some with whom this has become the settled plan of life; those of you, among others, who will listen to an argument that relates to a point in which you have no interest, but who, the moment the subject approaches the form of an earnest and anxious appeal to you, directly turn away coolly. Such have formed a very deliberate resolution *not* to do anything with reference to a preparation to die, further than to provide a decent place of interment, and to make a will, and arrange their worldly affairs. Not one step have you taken to prepare in any proper sense to enter the eternal world; not one thing have you left undone to crowd the whole subject from the mind.

At the beginning of another year you present yourselves in this sanctuary with this as a record of the past. You have gone through another entire year, and have kept the subject of religion from your mind. It is all the *permanent*, the *eternal* record which is likely to be made of you in relation to the past year. That record is made. You enter upon another year, intending still the same thing. Unpardoned, unrenewed, unsanctified, worldly, ambitious, vain, unreconciled to God, and designing to remain thus in God's world, and yet determined not to acknowledge Him; not far from His bar, and having made towards it the whole journey of another year, unprepared to meet Him; you have come here to-day intending that this shall be a prayerless and a thoughtless year also; perchance a year of gaiety, folly, sin. I admonish you with the fidelity of a

pastor and the tenderness of a friend, that for such a purpose you must soon give account to God. Hitherto you have done nothing to be prepared to meet Him. On your own grave, before the snows of the next December may fall, the grass may wave and the rose-bush may have been planted there by the trembling hand of a friend, and a year hence the winds of winter may howl around your tomb. Will you not offer this one prayer, "So teach me to number my years, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom?" Ye who have spent the past year in the neglect of the Bible, will you not be persuaded to begin, and continue, and end this, if you live, in the search of heavenly wisdom? Ye who have spent the past year without prayer, shall this year be prayerless also? Will you not go to-day to the Fountain of wisdom, and ask His guidance and direction in the way of life? You whose life has been a life of vanity, and thoughtlessness, and sin, and whose leading reflections to-day should be those of amazement at the forbearance and compassion of God, will you not remember that it is possible to weary out that compassion and long-suffering, and that the message often goes forth, "Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground?"

And ye Christians, friends of the Redeemer, heirs of glory, who have been taught by the Eternal Spirit that your days are like the weaver's shuttle, and who enter now, perhaps, on the last year of your life,—certainly on a year whose journey of weeks, and hours, and moments, is to be travelled over but once,—will you not to-day in sincerity breathe forth this prayer, and open your bosom to the heavenly answer? "'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' Not to the ways of folly, not to schemes of life that Thou wilt not approve; not to inordinate gain, to ambition, to the love of the pride, *pomp*, and vanity of life; not to the ways of gaiety and

sin, but to those paths and plans on which wisdom is instamped, to sober views of life, of its shortness, of its value as a part of probation, to the nearness of its close, and the momentous consequence of the actions of this life. If in Thy inscrutable Providence it shall be Thy will that this year shall close our lives, help us to live as if *we* saw the coming of the day ; if in mercy we are carried through this year also, that we may so live that its deeds shall shed light and glory on our future being, and salvation around us ; but whether we live or die, that we may meet Thine approbation, and walk beneath Thy smiles. So let wisdom guide us, so let peace and the hope of heaven accompany us, to the moment so eventful to us, when the angel shall lift his hand, and swear that in regard to us ‘ time shall be no longer.’” Amen.

SERMON XVII.

THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE DEPENDENT ON THE RELIGION OF PRINCIPLE FOR SUCCESS.

"FOR which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace."—Luke xiv. 28-32.

It may be admitted that this passage of Scripture originally had reference to the views with which an individual should enter on a religious life. With such a reference it implies that he who becomes a follower of the Saviour should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act, and be prepared to meet them. Men, in other things, act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there would be every prospect of defeat. It implies, also, that we are to expect difficulties in religion. It will demand of us a life of self-denial, and will involve a conflict with spiritual foes, and, perhaps, expose us to the enmity and scorn of the world. It implies, also, that there is a necessity of a calm and fixed purpose of soul in true religion, and that no man can properly enter on a religious life who does not resolve, by the grace of God, to struggle until the victory *shall be* achieved, and who has not confidence that there

are resources sufficient to enable him to secure the triumph.

But still, though this was the primary meaning of the text, it is not departing from a fair interpretation of it, to make use of it with reference to the great purpose for which we are convened. Substantially the same principles in religion apply to an individual, and to the aggregate of individuals who compose the Christian church; to the one in securing his own salvation, and to the other in the highest enterprise in which it can be engaged,—that of spreading the Gospel around the world. Thus applied, the text would mean that in this work there should be a calm survey of the strength and resources of the enemy, and of the means of overcoming him; that there should be a resolution to persevere in the work in the midst of all embarrassments; that it should be conducted under the direction of firm principle, and not by impulses and temporary excitements; and that it should be undertaken with a belief that the enterprise is practicable, and that the ultimate success is certain.

A tower may be built from various motives, and different reasons may urge on the architect to the completion of his work. It may be prosecuted under the auspices of a settled plan, including all practicable estimates of the expense and time requisite for its construction, and of the obstacles to be overcome. Or it may be hastily begun with no proper sense of the expense and of the difficulties to be encountered, and carried forward by impulses rather than by settled designs. The architect may rear it as a place of refuge from an invading foe, or to perpetuate some illustrious deed in the history of his nation, and may be stimulated to complete it with the thought “that the last object on the sight of him who leaves his native shore, and the first to gladden him who re-visits it, may be something which shall

remind him of the liberty and glory of his country ;” and with the “ wish that infancy may learn the purpose of its erection from maternal lips, and that weary and withered age may behold it and be solaced with the recollection which it suggests.”

A war, also, may be engaged in and conducted from a great variety of motives. It may be a war of principle, where, though the immediate matter in issue may be of trifling importance, yet some great point is involved on which is suspended the liberty of a nation ; or it may be a war commenced with the love of conquest, the desire of fame, and the purpose to extend the limits of empire. Its expenses may be met, and its perils may be encountered, because everything dear is at stake ; or it may be rushed into under the impulse of excited feelings, and be sustained by the love of glory and the hope of brilliant achievements. Settled principle, the love of country, ambition, the glare and pomp and splendour of military triumph, or a desire to humble a rival, may be all the motives entering into the commencement or the prosecution of a war, and may all play their parts in the perils and privations to which it is incident. The Saviour speaks of a tower built as the result of deliberate calculation of a war prosecuted, where the plan was calmly laid, and where the issue could not be regarded as doubtful.

It is the design of this discourse to show that the missionary enterprise is to be carried forward in a similar manner, not by impulses, but with deliberation and system ; and that it must rely for success, not on temporary excitements, not on the romance of missionary feeling, not on brilliant achievements, and not on the beauty and grandeur which may be thrown around the enterprise, but on the religion of settled principle.

It is presumed in the missionary enterprise, that religion

does not concern us as individuals only. It teaches us to look on our families, on our country, on the world. There are great things to be accomplished on the earth, to which nothing else is adapted but religion. There are, indeed, valuable objects which can be secured by education, by science, by good government, by commercial regulations, by treaties of peace, by the wholesome influence of laws. Valuable as these things are, however, there are interests pertaining to men of greater magnitude which they can never secure, and which are reserved for the influence of religion alone. No advancement in the organizations of social life, no progress in the physical sciences, no improvement in the methods of education, no perfection which the science of government or jurisprudence can reach, can accomplish the objects which it has been reserved for religion to secure. There is a field which is entirely its own, and no encroachment has been made on its prerogatives by any advance in the other departments of human influence and action. Those objects relate to such points as the following :—the renovation of the human heart, the imparting of peace to a guilty conscience, the reconciliation of the alienated soul to God, support in times of trial and in the hour of death, the elevation of debased and degraded communities to the enjoyment of equal rights, the emancipation of the soul from the fetters of superstition, and the diffusion over the earth of the knowledge and worship of the Creator. Into this sacred and wide circle of influences other things enter, not with power sufficient to accomplish the great results desired ; and however much they may be made tributary to these objects when kept subordinate, the power which is to achieve the result is religion.

It is, also, presumed that there are great and undeniable evils existing upon the earth, which can be removed only by religion. Those evils are not removed by victories

achieved in battle, however brilliant they may be; for the triumph decreed to the conqueror furnishes no evidence that the moral and social evils of mankind have been in the least diminished by the success of arms. They are not wholly remedied by science and education. Valuable as the discoveries of science and the teachings of education are, yet there are evils in the human condition, which the perfecting of the telescope, and the measuring of the dimensions and distances of the stars, and the analysis of minerals, do not remove. The knowledge of the chemical properties of alcohol does not of necessity reform the drunkard; nor will the most thorough scientific acquaintance with its effects on the human frame save the well-educated youth from a drunkard's grave. They are not remedied by out-fits for discovery; nor in exploring foreign regions can we find a cure for human ills. The traveller to distant lands brings back no knowledge that will remove the evils of his own; nor will his passage through those lands for scientific purposes remove the evils there. They are not remedied by political changes. Such changes occur in a higher region, and the great and far-spread ills which affect the mass of mankind are little more influenced by them than the condition of the vapours in a humble vale is affected by the storm in the higher regions of the air. The tempest sweeps along the Apennines, the lightnings play, and the thunders utter their voice, but still the malaria of the Campagna is unaffected, and the pestilence reigns there still. So with most of the evils that affect mankind. The malaria remains settled down on the low plains of life, and scarcely is the surface of the pestilential vapour agitated by all the storms and tempests of political changes. Under all the forms of despotism, in the government of an aristocracy, a republic, or a pure democracy, and in all the *revolutions* from the one to the other, the evil remains

the same. There are evils in the world which have survived all political changes, and which are destined to live until they are reached by some more efficient reforming power than mere political revolutions. Great evils among the Greeks survived all changes in the government. Such evils lived among the Romans substantially the same under the Tarquins, the Consuls, and the Cæsars, when the Tribunes gained the ascendancy, and when the Patricians crushed them to the earth. They lived in more modern Europe, when the northern hordes poured down on the Roman empire, and when the Caliphs set up the standard of Islam in the Peninsula. They lived in all the revolutions of the middle ages alike, when spiritual despotism swayed a sceptre over the nations, and when they began to emerge into freedom. Under the British rule, they lived in the time of the Stuarts, during the Protector, and under the administration of the House of Hanover. In all the fierce contests for rule in this land, in the questions about changes of administration, there are evils which are no more affected, whichever political party gains the ascendancy, than the vapour that lies in the valley is by the changes from sunshine to storm on the summit of the Alps or the Andes. Such changes are to be wrought only by the influence of religion.

To effect these changes, there are the following kinds of religion upon the earth, on one or all of which reliance is to be placed,—that of sentiment, that of form, that of feeling, and that of principle.

The religion of sentiment is founded on the beautiful and grand in the works of nature, or in the scenes of redemption. It finds pleasure in the contemplation of the starry heavens, of hills, of streams, and of lakes, of the landscape, and of the ocean; and is willing, in these things, to admire and praise the existence of the Creator. In the contem-

plation of these things, there is no reluctance to admit the existence of a God, or to dwell on His natural perfections; for, in the placid beauty of a landscape, in the silvery murmuring of a rivulet, and in the opening of the rosebud, no attribute of the Deity is revealed, on which the mind, even of the gay and the wicked, is unwilling to dwell. This religion is found in all the departments of poetry, and in all the conceptions of mythology. It most abounded among the Greeks, a people who carried the love of the beautiful to a higher pitch than any other, and who embodied it in the conceptions of their "elegant mythology," and in their unequalled works of art, illustrative of that mythology. Over each of the works of nature, over every element and every event, over each tree and flower, and breeze, and waving field, and running fountain, they supposed a divinity to preside; and the art of the chisel, and the harmony of verse, were employed to embody and perpetuate their conceptions. It is impossible that the religion of the beautiful should be carried to higher perfection than it was at Athens. The character of the people led to it, as the character of a people always gives form to their religion, or is reciprocally moulded by it.

This is still the religion of poetry and romance, and over a large portion of the world, claiming particularly to be ranked among the refined and intellectual, it maintains its dominion. The names, indeed, which were used by those refined and elegant men with so much propriety to express their conceptions, are employed no more. Statues of breathing marble no longer embody those conceptions; but the notions of the Divinity differ little from the conceptions of Grecian mythology. The heaven to which they look forward differs little from the Elysian fields. That which is thought needful to prepare for that world differs little from the kind of virtues which a refined Athenian deemed necessary to

fit him for the world of beauty and of joy to which he looked forward.

Delighting, too, in the beautiful, this religion may find a species of pleasure in the scenes and events of redemption. There is much in the Bible which the religionist of this description may admire ; and such admiration may be mistaken for true Christian piety. There is no book which has more to gratify the taste for the beautiful and the sublime than the Bible. When the scholar can overcome his reluctance to look into it because it is a *religious* book, there is no book in which he will find more to meet all that a scholar loves than there. There is no department of poetry,—if we except the epic, which was not consistent with the design of the book, and the dramatic, which was either unknown to the Hebrews, or regarded as perilous to virtue,—which may not be found in the most exquisite form in the sacred Scriptures. The world may be challenged to produce specimens of elegiac, lyric, and pastoral poetry that can be compared with that which is found in the poetry of David ; and for sublimity of thought and language, Isaiah confessedly outpeers all that was ever produced out of the land of Palestine.

This delight in the beautiful, in the religion of sentiment, may be carried farther than this. It may find a kind of pleasure in the peculiar scenes of redemption, and in the enterprise and romance of carrying the Gospel to distant nations. “ I confess,” says Rousseau, who, more than any other man, has illustrated the nature of this religion, “ that the sanctity of the Gospel is an argument which speaks to my heart, and I should regret to find any good answer to it. Look at the books of the philosophers with all their pomp, how little they appear by the side of this ! Can it be that a book at once so sublime and so simple should be the work of man ? Can it be that the person whose history

it relates was a mere man? Is such the manner of an enthusiast or a mere sectarian? What sweetness, what purity in His deportment! What touching kindness in His instructions! What profound wisdom in His discourses! What promptness, what ingenuity, and what pertinence in His replies! What entire command of His passions! Where is the man, where the sage, who can act, suffer, and die without weakness and without ostentation? Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." This religion, too, aims to hide what is repellent in the stern character of justice in God, turns away the thoughts from future wrath, adores the divinity within man, regards it as the great object of religion to raise him up to the perfection of his nature, would conceal all that is repulsive in the grave, and goes forth to beautify the tomb with the charms of nature and of art, to make the grave itself a pleasant place of repose,—“the last device of man without religion to get rid of the fear of death.” The faith of this class of religionists is recorded on marble monuments, and proclaimed in obituaries and eulogies. If we may credit such records, heaven is made up of poets and philosophers, of warriors and statesmen, of the amiable, the refined, and the gay, of the beautiful and the accomplished, of those who have lent a charm to society by their wit, or diffused happiness through halls of pleasure by the sweetness of their manners.

The religion of forms is founded on different things. It has been the prevailing religion of the world, and there is no other to which the great mass of men have so strong a tendency. In the time of the Saviour it had become the prevalent religion of the Hebrews, and found ample gratification in the gorgeous rites of the temple service. The Saviour aimed to introduce in its place a religion of simple

spirituality, with no gorgeous rites, no splendid ritual, no imposing ceremonies. Scarcely, however, had the last of the apostles died before, in the very churches planted by their hands, the last remains of spirituality had disappeared; and in the rites and ceremonies which had been borrowed from Judaism or Paganism all that had contributed to sustain formalism in the pagan world was introduced entire into the Christian church. Thenceforth, for centuries of night, Christianity became a religion of forms. Ages rolled by. Luther, Farel, Zwingle, Calvin rose. They drew off the true church, and restored the spirituality of the Gospel, and all that was left was, and continued to be, a religion of forms. But the tendency to this kind of religion was not effectually checked. It still lives, and it requires all the influence of advancing intelligence, of the spirit of liberty, of revivals, of religion, and of the withering rebukes of Providence, to check it; and, despite all these, nothing is more apparent than the tendency to forsake all that is spiritual in Christianity, and to relapse into the religion of forms.

This kind of religion relies on the efficacy of prescribed forms of devotion in conveying grace to the soul rather than on simple truth applied by the Holy Spirit. It has an extraordinary respect for tradition, as if wisdom died with the fathers, and they had authority to prescribe rites and ceremonies in the church. It looks with diminished respect on the Bible as the great fountain of truth, and as embodying the doctrines which convert and save, and relies much on truth supposed to be conveyed through other channels. In this religion a superior sanctity is attributed to men made more holy by office than the rest of their brethren, and appointed to convey grace to the soul. The efficacy of the truths of the Gospel is not secured by any intrinsic power which they possess, or by the direct agency of the

Holy Spirit on the regular succession. The sanctity of those through whom grace is conveyed is not in the men, but in the office ; it is not in clean hands and hearts, but in an unbroken succession ; it is not moral, but official, work ; it is not excellence arising from superior mental or moral endowments, or from a greater degree of industry or deadness to worldly influences, but that which imparts or indicates official superiority in the view of the mass of mankind. There is grace conferred in ordination, grace in the sacraments rightly administered, grace in absolution, grace in ordinances administered at the bedside of the sick and dying. This mode of religion regards certain places and scenes and times as holy above others, and as somehow conveying grace to the soul. It consecrates temples, churches, chapels, and altars, and regards them as possessing a mysterious holiness. From a consecrated shrine goes forth a sanctifying power, which could be secured in no other place, and which works as a charm in subduing sin and saving the soul. The place where the dead repose is holy, and a mystic virtue securing salvation encircles those who are buried there. From such a place the grossly wicked are excluded, and all others sleep there with the hope of a blessed resurrection. There is a religion that worships God, and another that worships the altar ; a religion that trusts in Christ, and another that trusts in the sign of the cross, the wafer, and holy water ; a religion that brings every thought into subjection by love, and a religion that bows down the soul under the weight of ceremonies, and binds its freedom by numberless rites ; a religion of broad phylacteries, and of cleansing the outside of the cup and the platter, and of garnishing the tombs of the prophets, and a religion of cleansing the heart, and of reliance on the simple efficacy of truth, and of making the soul pure before God ; a religion whose grace is conveyed to the

sinner by human hands and in the apostolic line, and a religion where grace is conveyed by the direct influence of the Holy Ghost. There is a religion whose justification and whose material, external and internal, is form ; and a religion whose whole essence is faith on the Son of God !

The religion of feeling or emotion differs from those of sentiment and of forms. It is not founded on the love of the beautiful or the grand in the works of nature or of redemption ; and is not satisfied with that which has power merely to charm and allure. It does not attempt to substitute form for spirituality ; for it is often of a highly spiritual nature, and may have the most thorough contempt for forms. It lives by whatever excites the affections, appeals to the sympathies of the soul, or opens the fountains of tears. It measures religion, not by the amount of truth embraced, or by the calmness and consistency of a holy life, or by the strength of principle evinced in resisting temptation, or in carrying forward great enterprises against organized opposition ; but by the amount of excitement which can be secured, and the joy that can be made to flow into the soul. Emotion, not principle, becomes the prompter to religious duty ; happiness, the gauge by which the amount of piety is determined. The facility of shedding tears at the remembrance of sin at the cross, is the evidence of repentance ; joy in the belief that sins are forgiven, is the proof of conversion. That preaching is of the right kind which excites the passions ; those appeals only are conformable to the Gospel which wake up the tumultuous feelings of the soul ; and religion in a community, or in the heart of an individual, is not the dew gently falling each night on the meadow, but the shower descending at uncertain intervals ; it is not the stream calmly and constantly flowing, or the fountain ever bubbling, but a succession of jets irregular in the time of *their bursting forth*, but beautiful ; it is not the calm glory

of the sun, but the sudden and ravishing brilliancy of the meteor. This religion lives not in settled convictions of truth and of duty, but in emotions, and tears, and raptures.

The religion of principle is different from either of those which have been specified, though it will embrace whatever is excellent in either of them or all. In common with the religion of sentiment, it may have a clear perception of the beautiful and the grand in the works of God, and in the scenes of redemption. In common with the religion of forms, it will be the patron of order; and will show all due respect for sacred places, and times, and modes of devotion. In common with the religion of feeling, it will cultivate the affections of the heart; and tends more than any other religion to produce tender sensibility and warm emotions. It refuses not to shed tears at the remembrance of sin; and, in view of the sufferings of the Saviour, it weeps over the wants and woes of the world; it is filled with joy in view of pardoning mercy; and it bursts forth into praise when the Redeemer's kingdom is advanced on the earth. But it does not consist wholly of these things. It is founded on the intelligent adoption of a rule of right, and on a steadfast adherence to it. This rule is adopted, not from whim, caprice, or custom, or civil authority, but because it is believed to be the will of God. It is adopted, not because it is beautiful, not because it can be wrought into poetry, not because it will contribute to popular favour, but because it is true. It may appear rough and rugged, harsh and severe; it may infringe on many customs in society, or even on the laws of the land; it may require that our strong natural feelings should be suppressed, and that the tender ties which bind us to country and home should be severed, that we may go and *do our duty* to our Saviour in a foreign land; but the will *of God* is regarded as final in the case.

It is not in such a religion a question that is asked, whether the matter at stake be of great or of little value, or whether what is done will be blazoned abroad, or will be unknown. What is done will be done because it is *right*; not because it is beautiful or grand, or will be emblazoned by fame: what is resisted will be opposed because it is *wrong*; not because the evil is of vast magnitude, and the will immortalize the man. To those who do not well understand the nature of religion, this kind of religion often seems to be an obstinate adherence to trifles, and is set down as fanaticism: yet it need not be said that a *principle* is often tested by what seems to be a small matter, as the mass of gold is tested by the assay of the smallest portion. In the beginning of the American Revolution, it was not the *amount* of the tax that was attempted to be levied; it was the question whether the British Parliament had a right to tax the colonies, without their consent, at all; and this could as well be determined by a single sheet of stamp paper, a single pound of tea, or a single box of glass, as by an attempt to support all the expenses of the government by drains from the colonies.

As an illustration of the religion of principle, I may refer to an incident which occurred in our history, and which may show the manner in which all who are descended from those referred to should embark in every enterprise connected with religion. The "Mayflower"—a name now immortal—had crossed the ocean. It had borne its hundred passengers over the vast deep; and, after a perilous voyage, had reached the bleak shores of New England in the beginning of winter. The spot which was to furnish a home and a burial-place was now to be selected. The shallop was unshipped, but needed repairs, and sixteen weary days elapsed before it was ready for service. Amidst ice and snow it was then sent out with some half-dozen

pilgrims, to find a suitable place where to land. "The spray of the sea," says the historian, "froze on them, and made their clothes like coats of iron." Five days they wandered about, searching in vain for a suitable landing-place. A storm came on, the snow and the rain fell, the sea swelled, the rudder broke, the mast and the sail fell overboard. In this storm and cold, without a tent, a house, or the shelter of a rock, the Christian Sabbath approached,—a day which they regarded as holy unto God, a day on which they were not to "do any work." What should be done? As the evening before the Sabbath drew on, they pushed over the surf, entered a fair sound, sheltered themselves under the lee of a rise of land, kindled a fire, and on that little island they spent the day in the solemn worship of their Maker. On the next day their feet touched the rock, now sacred as the place of the landing of the pilgrims. Nothing more strikingly marks the character of this people than this act; and I do not know that I could refer to a better illustration even in *their* history, showing that theirs was the religion of principle, and that this religion made them what they were. The whole scene,—the cold winter, the raging sea, the driving storm, the houseless, homeless island, the families of wives and children in the distance, weary with their voyage, and impatient to land; and yet the sacred observance of a day which they kept from principle, and not from mere feeling or because it was a form of religion, shows how deeply embedded true religion is in the soul, and how little it is affected by surrounding difficulties. In matters indifferent, and not enjoined by the high authority of God, this religion is gentle as the breathings of an infant, and yielding as the osier or the leaf of the aspen: in all that is commanded, all that is a matter of duty, all that pertains to the laws of God, it is like an oak *on the hills*. There it stands, its roots fixed deep in the earth,

and perchance clasping some vast rock below the surface, its long arms stretched out, and its upright trunk defying the blast. There it stands, the same, whether the sun shines calmly on it, or whether the heavens gather anger and pour upon it the fury of the storm. It is on this kind of religion that, under the Divine blessing, we are to rely in the work of Christian Missions.

The great objects contemplated by religion in the world, cannot be secured by the religion of sentiment. I mean that we cannot place reliance on that in effecting what Christianity is undoubtedly designed to accomplish, in fulfilling the great command of the Saviour, to publish His Gospel in all lands.

That in the theory of a missionary enterprise there may be much attractive beauty, and much that would commend itself to this kind of religion, there can be no doubt. There *is* a beauty, a charm, a romance; a "high emprise," a manifest benevolence, and an acting out of the feelings of brotherhood, in such an undertaking, which would accord well with this species of religion. Whatever is beautiful, romantic, grand, agrees with its nature; and whatever of external glory may be thrown around this great enterprise, may be expected to awaken sympathetic feeling in the bosom of its votaries. In the missionary cause, viewed from the scenes of quiet and ease in a Christian land, there may be much which we should expect would make an appeal to this kind of religion. The glory of exploring unknown regions, of studying nature there in forms which we have never seen, of surveying man in modes of living, of opinion, and of laws, which have the charm of novelty to us; the glory of being the first to convey there the results of science, and of causing the flowers of literature to bloom in hitherto barren wastes; the glory of carrying there the triumphs of the healing art, and of founding asylums and hospitals; the

glory of unloosing the fetters of bondage, of giving to man as an intellectual and moral being the rank which he was designed to have in the scale of being, and of diffusing over lands now barren the beauties which "smile on a Scottish or New England landscape;" the glory of founding schools and colleges, and of seeing pure temples rise to the honour of God, may have a charm in the view of one, all whose religion is the religion of sentiment; and in such an enterprise, all that there is in that religion we may suppose would be gratified. To such an one it might be supposed that the missionary cause would present itself as the noblest in which man can engage.

And so it does in theory; but the romance of missions soon dies away, and with it all the zeal of such religionists in the cause. It becomes not a thing of ideal beauty, but of sober reality; and demands other principles to sustain it than the love of the beautiful or the grand. To leave one's country and home and friends for ever, to bid adieu to the comforts and refinements of a Christian land, to mingle ever onward with savages, on whose souls "fair science never dawned," to witness their degradation, to partake of their fare, to originate among them the first notions of social order, decency, and taste, to labour on from year to year, and see scarcely any progress made, to be poor and to be forgotten by the mass of mankind, and to be sick in a far distant land, friendless and alone, and to die there and be buried with, perhaps, not a friend to weep, and not a stone to mark the spot; all this is a trial to which the mere admiration of the beautiful in religion is not adapted to prompt the soul. The religion of sentiment does not find its home in such scenes. On the soft couch of luxury, in scenes of refined social life, in the drawing-room, in the banqueting-hall, or in the gorgeous temple of religion, is its *appropriate* abode. Here adapting itself to whatever is

refined and courteous in social life, engaged in the pursuits of elegant literature or in the arts, the patron of whatever is urbane and courteous, and diffusing a sweet charm over life, and making lovely the face of society, it meets the instinctive desires in the human bosom for a religion of some kind, and it keeps the conscience at ease. But it is not adapted to such rough and perilous scenes as the apostles engaged in, and such as are inseparable from the life of a modern missionary.

There is not enough in this religion to sustain those who are willing to peril their lives in such a cause. To prosecute this cause is to do a work of steady sacrifice and self-denial. It is to pursue the steady plan amidst the coolness of friends and the opposition of foes. It is to embark in it, expecting that life will close before it is completed, and that future generations will prosecute and complete it. Now, there is no mere love of the beautiful in religion that will do it. There is no protracted charm of romance that will do it. There can be no such illusive splendour thrown over the enterprise, as to make a father willing to part with the son whom he has carefully trained, or to press to his bosom, for the last time, his daughter, that their lives may be spent far away in heathen lands,—to labour, perchance, without sympathy there; to be sick, with neither father nor mother to sustain them, and to die, and be buried, and forgotten there. Great enterprises for the amelioration of the world depend for success on sterner principles than this. "It is not by flowers and verses, by declamations on the beauty of spring and the goodness of the Deity," by the love of adventure and the charm of novelty, that the soul is to be supported, when called to part with earthly comforts, and to meet with persecution or neglect. No mere sentimental feeling led Howard to gauge the misery of the prisons of Europe, and to inhale their pestilential air; no

mere admiration of the loveliness of freedom led Clarkson and Wilberforce to devote their days and nights to the relief of the oppressed African ; and no romance in the struggles for liberty could have induced Hancock and Adams to peril their lives and their fortunes in the cause of American freedom. Accordingly, the religion of sentiment has never given birth to missions. The Grecian sage, in whose bosom this religion found its most congenial home, made no efforts to carry it abroad. He was content to impart a knowledge of its beauties in the Academy, or to transmit it in the "mysteries;" and though Solon and Pythagoras crossed seas and deserts to *gain knowledge* in other lands, they made no journeys to secure proselytes to their religion there. The Sadducee, who, among the Hebrews, was the type of this religion as it exists in other lands, originated no missions, and submitted to no sacrifices, that his views might be propagated among the nations of the earth. Rousseau contemplated no mission to those on whom the beauty of religion, as seen by him, had never dawned ; and the Theophilanthropist was content to strew flowers on the altars which he had erected in Paris, and to deliver homilies on the beauties of morality there, with no attempt to shed this light on the darkened souls of the heathen. No transcendentalist leaves the calm retreats of the academic grove to fix his abode in Kaffraria, or New Zealand ; nor among all those who are so charmed by the beauty of religion, by the purity of the precepts of Christ, and by the moral perfection of His character, but who deny His atonement ; so loud in proclaiming the perfectibility of man, and so eloquent in praise of that Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light, but who deny the absolute depravity of the race, and the necessity of the new birth ; so much in love with a religion which gives a superior *cultivation* to the intellect, and a charm to manners in social

relations, but who see no attractiveness in the severer views of the evangelical system, has a mission ever been originated and sustained. Of all this class there is not now a single missionary to propagate these views in any heathen land; nor does all the zeal with which these views are defended at home, nor the eloquent descriptions of the elevating tendency of that religion, and its adaptedness to remove the evils which afflict our race, prompt to a single effort to rear a temple in honour of that religion on a pagan soil.

Equally true is it, that the religion of forms is not adapted to such an enterprise. It cannot be denied that it has some advantages for such a work above the religion of sentiment, and that this religion has given birth to enterprise, involving sacrifice and self-denial which would be an honour to any cause. It cannot be denied that it has often turned its attention to Christian missions, and that powerful organizations have been formed, and are still in operation, under its auspices, contemplating the spread of a species of Christianity among those who "are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death." No man will hesitate to attribute the praise of a burning zeal to Xavier; and the sacrifices and self-denials of Brebeuf, and Raymbault, and the "delicate Lallemand," among the North American Indians, have gone into the permanent records of history. From such sacrifices and self-denials I do not intend to deny that the missionaries of a purer Gospel may learn many an invaluable lesson; nor should the praise which is due to an heroic ardour be withheld from their memory. For such zeal, inspired by the religion of forms, it would not be difficult to account; but it is easy to see that the great object contemplated by the Saviour can never be secured under the auspices of such a religion. The attachment for a religion of forms seizes with such

power on the soul, that they who are devoted to it are willing to make great sacrifices in its defence, and even to become martyrs in spreading it through the world. It has a power which is never found in the religion of sentiment; for it regards religion as a momentous thing, and deems it essential to the salvation of man. Such is the sense of the value of religion, so deep becomes the conviction that this particular kind of religion is essential to salvation, so exclusive is it in its very nature, and perhaps, too, so strong is the love of power, and the desire of a wide dominion unconsciously substituted for religion, that it may summon the mightiest energies of the soul for its diffusion, and boast of a catalogue of martyrs as extended as any other. The Pharisees, the great type of this kind of religion all over the world, compassed sea and land to make one proselyte; and it is not strange that the same kind of religion should produce the same zeal in every age and country.

But what will be the real objects aimed at under such auspices? What will be the effect on the converts made? The Saviour said, in reference to a convert made by enterprises of this nature, "And when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." (Matt. xxiii. 15.) They who engage in such enterprises will be the patrons and advocates of a religion of forms wherever it may be found, and will endeavour to adopt these forms, and accommodate them to their own religion, as if the work were to convert forms to new names rather than to convert the souls of men. In the systems of the heathen there are many forms of religion, which only need a new name, and new associations, to become all that is contemplated in a religion of Christian forms. Let a Christian name be given to a heathen temple; let the existing heathen *priesthood*, even without a change of vestments, be baptized,

and adopted into the ranks of a Christian priesthood ; let the altar on which heathen sacrifices have long ascended, remain, and be re-consecrated, still to be an altar in a Christian temple ; let the incense continue to be wafted by other hands ; let baptism be substituted in the place of ablutions ; let the worship of canonized Christian martyrs be substituted in the place of that of heroes ; let the days consecrated to the memory of the gods become days to commemorate the virtues of the saints ; and let the reverence for a sacred order of men, and for sacred places, temples, shrines, and burial-places, remain unchanged, and the work of missions contemplated by a religion of form is accomplished. The heart is unconverted ; the mind is debased and degraded still. There has been the transfer of a *religion*, not the regeneration of a *soul* ; a conversion of rites and ceremonies, not the renewal of the alienated human heart. The gain has been in enrolling a name among the outward friends of Christianity, not in recording it in the book of life. In the sixth century, it is said, that Gregory sent to Britain, ordering that, for the accommodation and allurements of the pagans, and to make Christianity sit easy upon them, the days on which they had been accustomed to sacrifice to the gods, should be appointed as festivals of the saints ; and so the populace be allowed to bring and kill their victims, and perform their sacrifices, as usual. If, in enterprises of this kind, the Gospel should be sent to those among whom the forms of Christianity already have an existence, the purpose will be to become identified with those forms, and perhaps to make common cause against a purer and simpler religion. The grand aim will not be to breathe the pure spirit of religion again into those dead forms, but to express towards them a fraternal feeling, to trace out the features of resemblance and consanguinity, and to glory that a new argument is found in a collateral

line for the apostolic succession. On such a religion, therefore, we cannot depend for the conversion of the world to God.

Equally clear is it that we cannot rely on the religion of feeling or emotion. The reasons of this are too obvious to make it necessary to enter into a formal statement of them.

There is enough in the condition of the world to excite the deepest emotion, and to appeal to all the tender sensibilities of the soul. By no one, with whatever talent he may have been endowed to work upon the sympathies of mankind, has the description of human misery been overdrawn. We may be certain that such descriptions never go beyond the reality ; and that when in view of human guilt and wretchedness our eyes run down with tears, the emotion is not caused by imaginary woes. There *is* ignorance and misery in every heathen community so deep as to secure us against the impossibility of ever being reproached for weeping over fancied sorrows. The description of the widow burning on the funeral pile, of children devoted to the Ganges, of the Hindu swinging on hooks, of infanticide in China and in the islands of the South Sea, of the painful postures of the Brahman, of the sickening scenes in the festivals in honour of Juggernaut, of human sacrifice, and of the debasing vices of the heathen world, over which our hearts bleed when our brethren return from distant lands and tell us what they have seen, are all drawn from reality, and we need not apprehend that they are over-coloured. When the Christian has wept over these things in his closet, there has been occasion for his tears ; and when the great congregation has been held in breathless stillness by a description of heathenism by one who has come to tell us of this woe and degradation, there has been occasion for all *our sympathy*. It was right to weep. It was what the

Saviour did when, on earth, He looked on dying men ; it is what He would do if He dwelt among us now.

But can we depend on this sympathy, this mere emotion, in the enterprise of carrying the Gospel around the world ? There are great laws of our nature which forbid it. God has made us creatures of sympathy, and of feeling, to prompt us to action where something is to be done for which it would not be safe to rely on cool reflection, but not with reference to enterprises which demand years or ages for their fulfilment. We console the sufferer, we relieve the afflicted, we press through the flames, or plunge into the stream, to rescue a child from death, prompted by instantaneous emotion, where reason would be too slow to come to the aid of the sufferer. When the pestilence breathes through a land, or the earthquake engulfs cities and towns, we at once, under the influence of feeling, open our hands and hearts for the relief of the sick and the dying, prompted to it so soon that cold avarice may not prevent the exercise of sacred charity. From the same law of our nature, we open our doors to the wounded soldier, and spread for him a couch on which to die. But we consult about the constitution of a republic, we found colleges and schools, we lay down an iron road, or dig a canal, or construct a breakwater, we endow an hospital or an asylum that shall diffuse blessings over distant generations, under different auspices. These things depend on a different law of our being, and appeal to different principles of our mental constitution : nor could the foundation of emotion be raised so high as to make it the basis of a calculation that these great objects could ever be secured.

There is another law of our nature which shows that, in securing these objects, you cannot depend on feeling or emotion. To secure the promptings produced by emotion, the object must be before you, or must be so vividly painted

that you see it as a reality. As long as it acts it must be in the eye. But how could that object of pity be kept so steadily in the eye amidst the necessary business and the allurements of life as to prompt to steady action? How can the image of distress be so constantly before us as always to affect the heart? The circumstances of our being forbid it; and even if it were always there, the laws of our nature would make us soon cease to be affected by it. Soon; for our nature cannot bear long excitement; we learn to look on scenes of woe without emotion. We go into an hospital, and shed not a tear; we walk over a battle-field, strewed with the dying and the dead, without emotion; we hear the piteous wail of the beggar without concern; and we should soon learn to look upon the sufferings of the whole heathen world without being prompted to any great effort for their relief. The cry, too, that comes from the heathen world is distant. It almost dies away before it reaches our ears; and when the vibrations come to our atmosphere, they are so driven from their direction, and so drowned in the hum of business, that they reach not the ears of the great mass of those who call themselves Christians, and we continue to urge on the affairs of commerce, and ambition, and pleasure, as if not a heathen had a soul to be saved. You cannot depend, then, on the religion of feeling or emotion to accomplish the great purpose contemplated by Christian missions.

But if you can depend on neither of these kinds of religion, there remains but one other source of reliance. It is

THE RELIGION OF PRINCIPLE.

We shall see its value by a brief specification of particulars in reference to the nature of the work to be accomplished.

First. It is an enterprise stretching into coming ages. It is not expected, unless it be by a few visionary men, to be accomplished in a single generation. They who embark now in the enterprise for converting the world, do not dare to hope that they will see its consummation. They expect to be withdrawn from the field before the standard of victory waves on the ramparts of the enemy, and perhaps before a single blow is struck that shall make its strongholds tremble. The laurels which they hope to wear are not those which shall be conferred as the result of the final triumph; and whatever banners they may see floating when their eyes shall be turned to behold the sun in heaven for the last time, they do not even hope to see what they believe will yet be seen,—the banners of salvation all covered with living light, floating over the sea, and the land, and in every wind under the whole heaven, in demonstration that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. That sight will be reserved to greet and bless other eyes here below. *They* will see it when they shall look down from the battlements of heaven; or if from those heights they cannot look upon the earth where they dwelt, and toiled, and prayed, they expect to learn that the victory is achieved from those who come up redeemed out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue under the heaven, to mingle their hallelujahs before the throne.

There is not upon the earth an enterprise commenced whose completion stretches so far into futurity, or which makes so large a calculation on the fidelity of coming ages, as the missionary cause. In most of the undertakings in which we engage as individuals, we hope to see the completion ourselves. Of the orchard that we plant we hope to eat the fruit; in the house that we are building we hope to dwell; the avails of the commercial adventure in which

we embark we hope to enjoy ; the land from which we cut away the primeval forest we hope to see covered with the golden harvest ; and in the growing honours that shall gather around the son that we educate we hope in our old age to rejoice. And so in more public undertakings. On the canal that we are excavating we hope to see borne along the productions of the teeming soil ; over the railway that we are laying down, though valleys are to be filled and mountains levelled, we expect to see the long train of cars fly rapidly along ; the ship whose keel we lay down we expect soon to see riding majestically on the deep ; the college whose corner-stone we lay we expect soon will open its doors to receive the youth of the land ; and in the solemn temple whose walls we rear we trust that we and our children will soon worship God. We have faith, indeed, in the next generation that it will finish what we have begun ; and faith in all future ages, that they will preserve what we secure by our valour, or establish by our wisdom. But how few private enterprises would be commenced, if it were foreseen that they could not be completed before the life of the individual would be closed ! And how few public undertakings would be embarked in, if their completion was understood to depend entirely on the fidelity of far-distant generations ! Who would lay the foundation of a college or a temple of worship, if this were the anticipation ? Who would engage in a war, even for freedom, if it was foreseen that the fury of conflict was to rage from generation to generation, that the soldier and the officer were to die in the struggle unblessed with the sight of victory, and that the laurel was to be won, if at all, by some victor of a far-distant generation, to whom your name would be unknown ?

The missionary enterprise stretches farthest into futurity,

implies the highest confidence in the fidelity of future ages, and anticipates the most steady and persevering self-denial *in* those ages, of any cause in which men are now embarked.

In this respect it involves two things : first, faith in God ; a firm belief that He is the patron of the cause ; that He will continue to keep it before the minds of His people ; that He will give them the means to prosecute it ; that He will convert our children and our children's children, and incline them to devote themselves to the work of rearing the glorious temple whose foundation we lay. Second, faith in coming generations ; that they will approve the wisdom of our plans, that they will be willing to deny themselves and take up the cross to finish what we have begun, that they will bear the cause on their hearts before God, that they will consecrate their wealth to the work, that they will devote their sons and their daughters to teach in the schools which we establish, that they will give up their choicest youth to publish the Gospel in the places where we lay the foundation of churches, that they will finish translating the Bible which we had begun to translate, and that when in this warfare every leader and subaltern has fallen, others will rush in to supply their places, till—

“ The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy ;
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.”

Such an enterprise cannot be commenced and carried forward to its completion, except under the auspices of the religion of principle. If this does not exist in the church, after a few fitful and spasmodic efforts, after the sensibilities of the church have been plied until by repetition they have become paralysed, the cause will be abandoned, and

the heathen nations will continue to slumber on in the wretchedness of unbroken night.

Secondly. The enterprise to which the church is called in the prosecution of the work of missions is one which contemplates such difficulties, embarrassments, and discouragements, that every thing else but *principle* would be appalled. The friends of religion are not insensible to the existence of these difficulties. They have endeavoured, as far as possible, to gauge them before they embarked in the undertaking. They have tried to explore the extent of the unbroken wilderness that is to be made to bud and blossom as the rose, to take the height of the mountains that are to be levelled, and the depth of the valleys that are to be filled up. They have made it their business, as far as they were able, to "count the cost, and to number the hosts that come against them," before they have gone forth to the conquest. There has, probably, been no great enterprise in which man has been embarked, where the true nature of the difficulties to be encountered has been better understood, or where there has been less effort to conceal or disguise them. Christians have been instructed by their Master not to anticipate an easy triumph, or a conflict with a feeble enemy. They understand that the warfare is against "principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places." They have seriously engaged in the great work of converting this whole world to God, and of establishing everywhere the reign of righteousness and peace. They know the obstacles before them. There are not far from six hundred millions of heathens who are to be reclaimed and elevated; there are one hundred and twenty millions of followers of the prophet of Arabia who are to be converted to the faith of Christ; there are one hundred millions of *nominal* Christians who are to be brought to a purer faith.

and a holier practice; there are three millions of the descendants of Abraham who are to be led to mourn over the act of their fathers in crucifying their own Messiah, and over their own unbelief. This great multitude is to be subdued and changed without arms, or the aid of civil powers, or the might of navies. The work is to be done by the simple Gospel. They who embark in this undertaking are not ignorant of the moral condition of that world of mind which is to be reclaimed and elevated. They do not expect to find it prepared to welcome the Gospel, disgusted with prevailing superstitions, rising to intelligence and purity by a recuperative power of its own, or ready to cast its idols to the "moles and to the bats." They do not suppose that the nations will be awakened from their long leaden slumbers by the first ray of light that breaks on their horizon, or that the budding charities of the soul which have died under the long winter of superstition and sin will of themselves swell into life. They do not expect to find minds prepared by science to welcome a pure faith or to appreciate the argument for Christianity. They do not expect to find the heathen making progress in the arts, and carrying forward the conveniences and elegances of life, till they approximate what Christianity would do, and prepare them to welcome that system as the completion and perfection of their own. They expect to find the soul as dark and debased as it can be, and the space which divides the human race from the brute reduced to the narrowest possible dimensions consistent with preserving that distinction at all. The heathen are of themselves making no advances towards the truth, or towards a better system of religion. They make no progress towards civilization, intelligence, liberty. There is no elastic energy in a heathen mind, no recuperative power to bring it back to God, no well-spring of life to purify the soul. The effect of time is only to

deepen the darkness, and to drive the heathen farther from God. They only adore more shapeless blocks, they bow before worse-looking idols, they worship in less elegant and more polluted temples. The idols of the heathen are not constructed with half the skill and taste with which they were two thousand years ago, nor are their temples built with such exquisite art. No idol of the heathen world could now be compared with the statue of Minerva at Athens; no temple can be likened to the Parthenon; no sentiment originated now in China, India, or Africa, equals in sublimity or purity the views of Socrates. The heathen world is becoming worse and worse; more degenerate, more abominable, more pitiable, from age to age. The friends of this great cause do not suppose that that degraded world of mind will arise by an elastic energy of its own, or that the river of pollution and death, by rolling longer, will work itself pure. They have entered on this work, feeling that evil in the heathen world is organized and compacted; that it is sustained by law, and incorporated with institutions having the sanction of ages, and with all their views of science; that it can bring to its aid the authority of a priesthood supposed to be heaven-appointed; and that their poetry, their apophthegms, their traditions, all support the religion which we seek to displace. This great enterprise has been engaged in, also, in full view of the apathy, and coldness, and want of zeal of the great body of the Christian church, of all the prejudice which has been caused on heathen shores by those bearing the Christian name who have gone for unholy gain, for plunder and rapine; of all the unrighteous wars which professedly Christian sovereigns have waged there; of all the injury done by slave ships approaching a heathen coast under the abused flag of a Christian nation, to seize and fetter its unoffending inhabitants, and to bear them away to *hopeless bondage*: and we expect to prosecute this great work

in the very light and blaze of burning villages and hamlets fired by those who bear the Christian name. This immense and far-spread prejudice we hope to overcome by the exhibition of that benevolence which the Gospel prompts, and by making the heathen understand, by a long course of efforts pursued for their good, that *all* who bear the Christian name do not visit their shores for plunder and rapine. And this work has been commenced in full view of the belief that all this evil is systematized and arranged under the control of one master mind, the presiding spirit of evil, and that it is "methodized and wielded with a comprehension of plan which no man can explain upon the principle of accidental coincidence." Under this comprehensive plan these various forms of evil are all marshalled and wielded; and every point may be defended by a leader who seems to have the power of ubiquity of action to strengthen whatever position is attacked. In such an enterprise on what kind of religion shall we rely? Not the admiration of the beautiful is to accomplish this work; not that religion which would go to assimilate itself to these systems, or to adopt their forms as its own; and not that "goodness" which, "like the morning cloud, soon vanishes away."

Thirdly. The missionary enterprise is one which is to be pursued through scenes of alternate hope and fear, in times of elevation and depression, when the sea is smooth and a steady breeze swells all the canvass, and when the storm arises and the billows roll. The appeal is not to be made to the church on the ground of success. The heart is not to be unduly elated when opposition yields and the Gospel achieves great triumphs; nor is it to be depressed when opposition becomes formidable, and no impression is made on the powers of darkness. The church is not to become self-confident or suddenly flushed with the hope of victory, when her sons press forward to fill the ranks of those who have

fallen in her service ; nor is she to be disheartened when they prefer the gains of commerce, the honours of a learned profession, or the calm retreats of the porch or the academy, to the paths of self-denial which must be trod by the Christian missionary. It is the nature of this work to be calm and confident in God, though the last herald of salvation on heathen ground, faint and feeble, should lift up the cry for help, and not a youth of the land should run to his aid. The church is not to be elated unduly when religion seems to make its way triumphantly among mountain fastnesses, to find out an old and dilapidated church, and to kindle up again the flame of pure devotion in its ancient temples ; nor is she to despond though armed hosts follow the adventurous tread of the Christian missionary, and murder the priests of religion, and lead Christian matrons and virgins into captivity, and extinguish there the holy flame which had begun to burn anew on those mouldering altars. From the very nature of Christianity it will visit those mountain fastnesses again, undismayed, with the firm confidence that the holy light of religion will yet shine unextinguished there. Nor is the church to place her reliance on the wisdom of men, or to feel unduly elated when the leaders in this cause are blessed with uncommon prudence and sagacity, or to be dismayed when such men are removed. The enterprise lives on while its earthly leaders die. It is not essentially disturbed though such a man as Worcester, or Evarts, or Cornelius, or Wisner, be taken from its councils ; for the great Leader and Counsellor lives. Those *were* uncommon men. Few causes in which men have been embarked have had such men to lose ; many a cause could not have parted with them and yet survived. Many an enterprise has been begun and ended under a single leader ; and when the great mind that conceived it was withdrawn, no one was found to *carry forward* the plan which he had formed, and the fabric

which he had reared fell by its own weight. The plans which had been commenced by Alexander could have been matured and perpetuated only by his own talents; and, when he died, the immense empire which he had founded crumbled to fragments. The empire over which Napoleon ruled rose under his own mighty genius; and had he never been driven from his throne, the world would not have had an intellect fitted to perfect his plans when he died. Cromwell left no successor to carry out the principles of that Protectorate which had made England more formidable and more respected than she had been under all her dynasties of kings from the time of Alfred; and, deprived of his mighty mind, the nation bowed to the sceptre of the most miserable specimen of royalty that ever occupied a throne. Not so when perpetuity and triumph depend on principle. Had Samuel Adams and John Hancock, when proscribed by the British government, been arrested and put to death; had the voice of Patrick Henry been silenced by a poniard or a bribe; had the sagacity of Franklin and Sherman been withheld from the councils of the Revolution; nay, had the ball from the rifle of the Indian chief, aimed with a skill which had never before failed, pierced the heart of Washington, there would have been other Adamses, and Hancocks, and Henrys, and Shermans, and Franklins, and Washingtons, to conduct the nation to freedom; for there were great principles of liberty involved, which could neither be proscribed, nor bribed, nor put to death. So, in the cause of spreading the Gospel around the world. No matter what earthly leader falls, the cause is to live. There are great principles involved in that cause, and it must live on from age to age; and when a leader falls, the church is not to be dismayed. She has embarked in this enterprise, expecting that this is to be; and has learned to anticipate that a long succession of such men as Worcester, and Evarts, and

Cornelius, and Wisner, *must* die before her object is accomplished.

Fourthly. The missionary enterprise contemplates such sacrifices as can be met only by steady principle. It supposes that there must be great self-denials, great expenditures, great sufferings. It was an elementary idea in the work of the Saviour, when He undertook our redemption, that He was to be poor, despised, and forsaken; that He was to grapple, single-handed, with the most mighty enemy of God that the universe contains; that He was to endure the keenest tortures which the human frame could be made to bear. It was an elementary idea in the religion of Paul, that he was to abandon his splendid prospects of distinction; that he was to look away from the honours of scholarship, office, or eloquence, which had glittered in his youthful eye; that he was to be regarded as the "off-scouring of the world;" that he was to leave his country and his home; that his dwelling was to be among strangers, and that his life was to be spent "in perils of waters, and of robbers, in perils among his own countrymen, and among the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, and among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings, and hunger, and thirst, and fastings, and cold, and nakedness."

The great enterprise in which the church is embarked now involves similar sacrifices and self-denials. It is supposed that there will be found in the church, from age to age, sufficient Christian principle to meet the requisition for those sacrifices and sufferings. When the Declaration of Independence was adopted, there was such a depth of principle required among those who signed it as to be ready to seal their attachment to it with their blood. John Hancock supposed that his conspicuous name might make him distinguished among those who might perish on the scaffold; and,

in full view of such a possible result, he and they pledged to each other their "lives, their fortune, and their sacred honour." The sentiments of all those men are well known, and the language eloquently attributed to one of them, (John Adams,) will express the feelings of patriotism founded on principle, and may express *ours* in the cause in which we are engaged. "I see, I see clearly through this day's business. You and I may rue it. We may not live at the time when this Declaration shall be made good. We may die, die colonists, die slaves, die, it may be, ignominiously on the scaffold. Be it so: be it so. If it be the pleasure of Heaven that my country shall require the poor offering of my life, the victim shall be ready at the appointed hour of sacrifice, come when that hour may. But, whatever may be our fate, be assured, be assured that this Declaration will stand. It may cost treasure, and it may cost blood; but it will stand, and it will richly compensate us for both. Through the thick gloom of the present, I see the brightness of the future, as the sun in heaven. My judgment approves of this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope in this life, I am now ready here to stake on it; and, live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration."

Such was principle, in a cause and on an occasion the most noble that the earth has witnessed, except that in which the church is engaged of spreading the Gospel around the globe. That is more noble, that involves still higher principle, and that may demand still higher and more continued sacrifices. The youth who gives himself to Christ should do it prepared to brave the cold of the north or the burning heat of the line, in carrying there the pure Gospel, and with the expectation that after many an hour of unpitied suffering he may lie unburied in a foreign land. The father is to be ready to part with his son, the

pride of his heart, and the anticipated stay of his age,—the son, whose early course has been radiant as the light of a morning without clouds, and who is qualified by native endowment to adorn the bar, the bench, or the senate-chamber,—to preach the Gospel to savages; and is to lay his hand on him, and bless him, as the ship is loosening from her moorings, expecting to see his face no more. The mother is to press her much-beloved daughter to her bosom for the last time, as she leaves her native land to meet the perils of the deep and the desert, and to die perhaps surrounded by strangers, and where her hand cannot soothe her dying sorrows. Youths, educated with all the care and skill that a Christian land can furnish, accustomed to the comforts and elegancies of life, with minds classical, tasteful, and refined like that of Henry Martyn, and with accomplishments that might adorn any circle, are yet to sing on many a deck, as the missionary ship glides away,—

“ Yes, my native land, I love thee ;
 All thy scenes, I love them well.
 Friends, connexions, happy country,
 Can I bid you all farewell ?
 Can I leave you,
 Far in distant lands to dwell ?

“ Home ! thy joys are passing lovely,
 Joys no stranger heart can tell.
 Happy home, 't is sure I love thee :
 Can I, can I, say farewell ?
 Can I leave thee,
 Far in heathen lands to dwell ?

“ Scenes of sacred peace and pleasure,
 Holy days, and Sabbath bell ;
 Richest, brightest, sweetest treasure ;
 Can I say a last farewell ?
 Can I leave you,
 Far in heathen lands to dwell ?

“ Yes, I hasten from you gladly,
From the scenes I love so well;
Far away, ye billows, bear me;
Lovely native land, farewell.
Pleased I leave thee,
Far in heathen lands to dwell.

“ Bear me on, thou restless ocean;
Let the winds my canvass swell;
Heaves my heart with warm emotion
While I go far hence to dwell.
Glad I bid thee,
Native land, farewell, farewell.”

To engage in and prosecute a work thus stretching into future ages; a work which contemplates such difficulties, embarrassments, and discouragements; a work which is to be pursued through such scenes of alternate hope and fear; and a work contemplating such sacrifices, self-denials, expenditures, and sufferings; there can be no reliance but on the *religion of principle*.

It is this religion, originated only by the Holy Spirit of God, which, we trust, gave birth to the enterprises undertaken by this Board, and which has thus far animated and sustained the Board and its Missionaries in the great work of giving the Gospel to heathen lands. The circumstances under which we meet, fathers and brethren, are adapted forcibly to impress this truth on our hearts. Thirty-three years ago, the Board held its second annual meeting in this place. It had then but nine members, and but a little more than a thousand dollars in its treasury, and had no missionaries in the field. It had four young men under its care, ready to go wherever the Providence of God should guide them; and whose wish to devote themselves to the work of missions was as clearly formed under the influence of *principle*, as any purpose ever undertaken by man. With similar feelings, they who then constituted the

Board, but one of whom now survives, assembled here, to look over the condition of the world. It was not a spirit of romance, terminating in a missionary enterprise, which led to their organization; it was not a desire to extend and perpetuate a religion of forms; it was not under the influence of mere temporary excitement. The Holy Spirit of God had created in their hearts a permanent conviction of the *duty* of obeying the last command of the Saviour, and of sending the Gospel to distant nations.

One third of a century—the period of a generation of the human race—has passed away. The income of the Board has increased from one thousand to more than two hundred and thirty thousand dollars. There was then no missionary station under their care; now there are ninety-five stations. Then no American had left his native land to be a missionary among the heathen; now one hundred and thirty-five ordained American missionaries proclaim the blessed Gospel to the nations of the earth, and almost five hundred labourers are employed by this Board in various departments of effort in pagan lands. Then not one had been converted among the heathen, by the instrumentality of this Board; now there are sixty-three churches, and more than twenty-five thousand members. Then the Board convened in this place in a private parlour; now the largest edifice will not accommodate its members and friends.

During the time which has elapsed since that meeting there have been reverses and discouragements, trials and deaths. But the religion under whose auspices the Board was formed has proved itself equal to the exigencies which have arisen, and adapted to the work. The ends of the earth have felt the influence of this Board. The sun never sets on its missionary stations; and in all its history there *has been* no occasion to doubt that the religion of principle *is adapted* to convey the Gospel around the globe.

Fathers and brethren, from the past let us take courage in regard to the future; let us never be disheartened by reverses; let us not be unduly elated by success; let us never confide in impulses and temporary excitements; let us, above all, never trust in our own wisdom and strength. Leaning on the arm of our God and Saviour, and seeking to cultivate in our own hearts more and more the spirit of that pure Gospel, which is itself nothing else than the religion of principle; let us go on under all reverses and discouragements, labouring patiently till the Master shall call us home, and then leave the work to other hands, with faith in God, and faith in coming generations, that it will be accomplished. We shall die; some of us will soon die, all of us at no distant period. But this work will not die: it will be as deeply embalmed in the affections of those who succeed us as it has been in ours; it will be as steadily prosecuted, it will make as triumphant a progress in future times, as it has done in our own. Its final triumph is the only thing that illuminates the darkness of the future; but that result is as clear as the sun in heaven. By the grace of our God we will do our duty while we live, we will be found at our post when we die, we will pass the work then into other hands; and in our final abode in heaven we will calmly wait until from a redeemed world a voice loud as the sound of many waters comes swelling up on high, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever."

SERMON XVIII.

THE SOVEREIGN PURPOSE OF GOD TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE, AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO EFFORT.

‘ THEN spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.’—Acts xviii. 9, 10.

THE Gospel, when first preached, everywhere encountered difficulties. The obstacles to its diffusion were laid primarily in the depravity of the human heart; but those obstacles were modified by the customs, the opinions, the prejudices, the philosophy, which prevailed in particular places. In Jerusalem the main difficulty arose from the disappointed hopes and the prejudices of the Jews; in Ephesus, from the dread of losing the gains accruing to a portion of the citizens from the connexion of the mechanic arts with idolatry; in Athens, from the reigning philosophy of the Epicureans and the Stoics. In Jerusalem, in Ephesus, and in many other places, the apostles had seen these difficulties give way, and the Gospel assert its ascendancy there in the conversion of multitudes. On the philosophy of Athens almost no impression was made; and having preached there with less success than attended his ministry elsewhere, Paul turned his steps to the neighbouring city of Corinth. Here a new difficulty met him. It was not Jewish prejudice; it was not the self-interest of men whose “gains” were likely to be taken from them by the preva-

lence of the new religion; it was not philosophy rendering the heart inaccessible to all the appeals of truth; it was that which has been always, wherever it has existed, a greater obstacle to the Gospel than all these combined,—the prevalence of moral corruption. In Corinth this corruption pervaded all classes of citizens. It made the name of the city proverbial throughout Greece and the world. It had caused splendid temples to be reared, devoted to impurity. It attracted strangers there from all lands, and that splendid city had become the centre of pollution for the whole world. Amidst this universal dissoluteness of manners, Paul needed some special encouragement in his work there. That encouragement was granted him, and the record of it constitutes my text. “Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: *for I have much people in this city.*” That is, He had “much people” there whom He *designed* to convert and save. It cannot mean that there were many there who were then His people, or who, in fact, loved and served Him; for that was not true, and that was not the encouragement which Paul needed. It must mean that there were those there in large numbers whom He intended to save, and to whom He now sent the Gospel as the means of their conversion, and whom therefore He who calls “things that are not as though they were” might call “His people.” In the corrupt, debased, and sunken mass, then bowing down in polluted temples, and giving unrestrained indulgence to the form of sin which offers the most direct resistance to “the Gospel of the blessed God,” there were those whom He meant to “wash, to sanctify, and to justify in the name of the Lord Jesus,” and to save. The doctrine of the text, then, it is not difficult to perceive. It is, that the purposes of Divine sovereignty are an encouragement to efforts in doing good; or, the fact that it is the intention

of God to bring His chosen people to heaven, should stimulate us and cheer us on in our efforts to save souls. This doctrine I propose now to illustrate and defend.

I am aware that it is often supposed that this doctrine has just the opposite tendency. I am not ignorant of the form in which it is often professedly held by the impenitent and the wicked, that "if they are to be saved they will be, and that effort will be useless;" nor am I ignorant of the effect which it may be made to have on many of the professed friends of truth. There is no doctrine of the Scriptures which may not be abused; and there is no occasion for denying that this has been so held by many ministers of the Gospel, and many churches, as to produce any other effect than to stimulate them to effort for the salvation of souls. And I am not ignorant that there is often real difficulty in pure and honest minds on the subject. If God is a Sovereign, if He has a purpose which embraces all things, if He has a plan of electing love, by which He designs to save all those who will actually be saved, it *seems* to be a doctrine that will paralyse effort, that will render fruitless all exertion, that repels all the human interference, and that must throw the cold chill of death over all the gushing sensibilities that would weep over the lost. But it is not desirable, or necessary, that it should have this effect on any minds. It had not on the mind of Paul; and I shall render a good service if I can show you that it does not necessarily, or properly, have this effect. The design of this discourse, therefore, is to show that, so far from having of necessity this effect, *the purpose of God to save his elect is the best ground of calculation, the best basis for effort, and the best encouragement for doing good in this world.* I shall do this by a series of propositions, closely connected, but plain, and so clear to all, that I trust they *will* leave no doubt of their truth.

I. The first is, that in the work of salvation there are many things to be done which are wholly beyond human power, or where the agency of man will be wholly insufficient. In other words, there is a sphere of operation which belongs only to God, and where He only can efficiently act. It is, indeed, no less true that the same principle exists in regard to all that is to be done with which the agency of a created being has any connexion; but my object requires me to illustrate it particularly only with reference to religion. A man plants a field, or sets out a vine. There is a sphere of agency in the result contemplated that appertains only to God, and where He only can operate; and any calculation which shall anticipate the result without that agency would certainly fail. All that pertains to the sunbeam, to the rain, to the dew, to the revolution of the earth, and the return of the seasons, to the atmosphere, to the mysterious laws by which the juices are conveyed through the fibres of the root, and carried up the stem, and diffused to each leaf, and branch, and tendril, to the delicate and beautiful agency by which the leaf is opened, and the fruit formed and matured,—all this belongs to God, and there is no human agency that can be substituted in its place. A man fits out a vessel for a distant port. In the success of this mercantile adventure, there is a sphere of operations wholly beyond the reach of man. All that relates to the freedom of the ocean from dangerous storms, to prosperous gales, to the purity of the air which the mariner is to breathe on a foreign strand, and to the preservation of life and health, appertains to the exclusive agency of God; and he who leaves out this as a part of his calculation, leaves out that which is an essential element in the question of success. A physician approaches a sick man, and prescribes for him. In his recovery there is a work which appertains wholly to God.

In the laws which govern health, in the recuperative powers of the human frame, in the guarding of the system from some other insidious and dangerous attack, and in the prolongation of the vital functions, there is a sphere where God only can act. There is no skill, or wisdom, or power, which can do what God has reserved for Himself to do ; and though man has done much, and boasted more ; though he claims to have disarmed the lightning, and can almost people the canvass with living forms, and make marble breathe ; and though he has set up an empire over seas and floods, yet he has made no invasion on the prerogatives of the Almighty, nor passed the bounds which were fixed when it was said to him, as to the ocean, "Thus far, but no farther." He paints no flower, he gilds no insect's wing, he colours no rainbow on the sky, he lights up no dead matter with the brilliancy of the living eye, he teaches no vital current to meander through an organized frame, diffusing beauty, and health, and life. And to the end of time there will be a sphere in which God alone will act, and which will never be invaded by the wit, the skill, or the power of man.

The same thing is just as true in the salvation of the soul. There *is* a sphere where God only acts, where He will only act, where He only can act. It may not always be easy to mark the limits where human power terminates, and where God only can act ; but no man can doubt that there *are* such boundaries on all subjects ; and the number is not small where it is known that the power of man does not extend. It is settled that he cannot take the lightning in his hands, and "direct it under the whole heaven." (Job xxxvii. 3.) He cannot wield the thunderbolt ; he cannot hold the fixed star in its place ; he cannot "guide Arcturus and his sons ;" he cannot breathe life into the stiffened corse. So in religion. There *are* points where *all human agency terminates*, and is powerless. We may

not now be able to mark them all; but there are some that are known. Man cannot pardon sin committed against God, any more than he can bid flowers to spring up to beautify the landscape, or move the stars. He cannot arouse a sinner from his death in sin, and breathe into him spiritual life, any more than he can raise the dead. He cannot defend the church against her foes, or carry forward her great operations of animated nature. He cannot fix the wandering affections, or control the will, or change the heart of a neighbour, brother, or child, any more than he can wield the rapid lightning, and fetter it, to obey his mandate. He cannot place nations in a posture to receive the Gospel, or dispose them to a readiness to throw away their idols, and welcome the herald of salvation. To accomplish these and kindred things, there is but one power in the universe that is sufficient, and man can substitute nothing in the place of that power. He can do much in his proper sphere; but when he has done all, it will be still true, with reference to these things, that "it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord." Man can do much by improving his mental philosophy, he can make large advance in theological knowledge, he can urge far towards perfection his schemes of philanthropy; but he makes no advances in the work of accomplishing in religion what God has reserved for Himself to do, any more than in his laboratory he makes advances towards the proper skill and power for creating life in the vegetable world. The work of pardoning sin, of converting and sanctifying the soul, of preserving the church, and of preparing the way for the universal reign of righteousness, is reserved in His own hands, and pertains to a sphere of agency of His own. In regard to such things, *a calculation of success on the basis of man's power must certainly fail.*

II. In the second place, there are many things in regard to salvation which, although man *might* do them, it is certain he never *will* do; and the just ground of dependence is to be on the sovereignty of God. This also often occurs in other matters than religion. There are numerous cases in which men *might* save themselves from poverty and wretchedness and dissipation and an early grave, where there is a moral certainty that they never *will* do it; and we can make no calculation on the presumption that they will do it. A man may be so deaf to all the calls of duty, to self-respect, and to the admonitions of conscience; he may be so under the influence of impetuous and raging passion, that it may be morally certain that, though he has ample power, he never *will* forsake his evil way, unless an influence from above shall arrest and change him. So it is in the matter of salvation. We think we can show that a moral agent, such as man is, has all necessary natural ability to obey the laws of God, to comply with the terms of the Gospel, to repent of his sins, to love his Maker, to forsake the ways of transgression, to lead a holy life. We think a sinner lacks no natural ability to enable him to attend seriously to the subject of religion, to give up his heart to God, to avail himself of the offers of mercy and be saved. We think here is a field of possible human agency, very interesting and very broad, which might be occupied, though it never has been, by man. This view, we think, results from the very nature of moral agency and accountability; nor have we any way of vindicating the character of God, if He require of man more than in any sense he has the power to render. Such a doctrine, we think, is a violation of the principles of judgment in moral matters with which our Creator has endowed us, and we think it equally clear that it is contrary to the Bible.

But all this may be so, and yet it may be certain that no

man will of himself ever put forth his power, or do what he might do, in the matter of his own salvation. It is a power which has never been exercised, probably the only power that has always lain wholly dormant in the human soul. Man does not seem to be endowed with any power to move masses of matter, which he has not at some time exercised. He does not seem to have any power to brave the cold of the north, or to climb mountain heights, or to carry fire and sword into regions of unoffending peace, or to corrupt and destroy his fellow-men, or to resist the elements,—which he has not at some time put forth. But there is a dormant power in the soul in the matter of salvation, which man of himself never *has* put forth, and never *will*. So sunk is he in sin, so absorbed in self, so opposed to holiness and God, so blind to truth and duty, so averse to the cross, so hardened in depravity, that this power never has been exerted self-originated since the fall, *and all calculations of success in religion on the basis of the expectation that man will exert it are vain*. You may satisfy his understanding that there is a God perfectly pure and lovely, but you have done nothing to induce him to love Him; you may convince his reason of the claims of Christianity, but you have made no advances towards leading him cordially to embrace it; you may press all the motives upon his conscience drawn from his infinite obligations and the claims of a perfect law, but you have gained no point where the sinner yields; you may appeal to all his interests, and urge all the solemn considerations you can draw from the hope of heaven and the dread of hell, from the desirableness of a peaceful death and a crown of glory, but you have done nothing to induce him to embrace that religion with which he knows all this is to be identified. You may describe the crown of glory,

and the white robe of salvation, and the river of life, and the throne of God, so that the description would thrill through the bosom of an angel; but you have done nothing to move the heart of man. And you may portray the flames, the blackness, and torments of an eternal hell, so that all heaven would tremble if the description were given there; and you have done nothing to move, arouse, or alarm man. Not a point is gained, not even momentary alarm is excited, nor from the deepest scene of woe and sorrow can the sinner of himself be induced for a moment to turn the eye on the bright fields of glory before him.

We know this is an anomaly, and we feel it; but still it is so. Everywhere else, except in religion, we have a strong assurance of success, when we appeal to men's reason and conscience, and to their obvious and undeniable interest. Here we have none. They sit unmoved when listening to the most affecting and awful truths of religion; or, if moved, it is only when they are roused to offer resistance. For anything that they care, the groans of Calvary might have been prolonged to the end of time; and for any effort which they will make, the harps of salvation might be unstrung for ever. They follow the world, when they know it will deceive them; they run the round of giddy vanity, when they know it is all false and hollow; they listen to the syren voice of pleasure, when it has a thousand times betrayed them; they indulge in wild and tumultuous passions, when they know they will ruin them; they refuse to return to God, when conscience and reason, and hope and fear, all prompt them to secure the salvation of the soul. They are haters of God, when they have abundant power to be His friends; degraded slaves to passion, when they might be *ennobled* freemen; miserable, when they might be happy;

troubled, anxious, and sad, when they might be calm; trembling under the dread of death, when they might look on it with triumph; restless, jaded, and dissatisfied, when their bosoms might be the abode of peace; and expiring without hope, when the dying bed might be irradiated with a flood of glory poured down from heaven. Such is man; and whatever may be said about his *ability*,—and much *may* be said,—it is still true, always has been true, always will be true, that men “will not come to God that they might have life.” He that goes forth preaching the Gospel, or in any other good work, making it the basis of his calculation that men will of themselves be disposed to yield and become Christians, is destined to the same disappointment as Melancthon. He may see them convinced of the truth of religion under his preaching, silenced by his demonstrations, kept at bay by his undisputed learning or talent; but he will not see them yield the heart to God. He may see them become restless under the truth which he urges, or curling the lip in scorn at some of his positions; or trembling, like Felix, under his reasonings; or almost converted, like Agrippa, by his argument; or aroused and wondering, like Festus; or grieved, like the young man who had great possessions; but he will see no giving up the heart to religion. He may minister for decades of years, till preacher and hearer grow grey together, to those who are convinced of the truth of these things, but they will not yield; or he may see his hearers turning their backs on his ministry, and fleeing from the house of God for ever, though convinced that all that he says is true. Such is preaching, arduous, difficult, strange, glorious, Godlike work. And if these things are so, then the ground of calculation of success is not on what man *will* do, but must be found in a sovereign God.

III. In the third place I observe, therefore, that the

Divine sovereignty is a more certain basis of calculation of success in efforts to promote religion than any thing else is. This might be presented as an *inference* from what has been said; for if we can depend neither on the power nor on the willingness of man, then we have no other basis of hope than in God. But I choose to present it as a separate *argument*. It will thus be a step towards a just conclusion, as well as corroborate what has been said. I observe, then, that you can make no certain calculation on any thing else. This is true in all other things, and it is true also in religion. You cannot calculate with absolute certainty on a continuance of even what are called the laws of nature, the most fixed things of which we have any knowledge; for God has power at any moment to change them. The statesman cannot calculate with certainty how men will act in given circumstances, familiar as he may be with the records of the past; for the past has not been observed with sufficient care and to sufficient extent, the motives of men have not been sufficiently understood, the lessons which history *might* teach are not well enough learned, or the will, and passions, and prejudices of men come in as a disturbing cause, and disappoint all his sagacious plans and prophesyings; for who can with certainty estimate the power of the human will and human passions as a *disturbing* cause in the execution of his schemes of policy, any more than the mariner can estimate the power of the whirlwind and the tempest in disturbing his voyage? You cannot calculate with certainty on the return of a richly-freighted ship from a distant port, or on a harvest, or on the success of any enterprise; for a thousand disturbing causes come in, which you cannot foresee, to frustrate your plans. Health may fail, or a blight may come over your fields, or the locust may devour, or the palmer-worm may consume what he has left, or the *wind may* blow from some unforeseen quarter, or pirates

may swarm on the deep, and all your calculations shall fail. So it is in doing good, and especially in the effort to convert a sinner from the error of his way, and to promote religion in the world. There is nothing *in* man that can be a basis of certain calculation or hope. The sinner has a conscience ; but you are by no means certain that he will allow it to perform its proper functions as the vicegerent of God. He may silence its reproofs by direct effort, he may pervert its decisions by bad philosophy or theology, or he may indulge in sin till it is seared as with a hot iron. He has an understanding ; but you are by no means certain that it will be allowed to perform its just offices. It may be blinded in its views, perverted in its judgments, or directly resisted by the will, when it would lead the soul to God. He has a heart ; but you have no security that it will love right things, or that all its affections will not be perverse and ruinous. You have no basis of calculation, that when you present a holy object to the human heart, it will be loved more ; that when the most vile and debasing is presented, the affections will not cling and cluster around it. The sinner has a will ; but in religion its decisions are more likely to be wrong than right ; they will be certainly wrong, we think, unless the grace of God shall incline to that which is good. The sinner has great interests at stake, and he was so made by His Creator as to be fitted to act in view of them ; but you have no evidence that he will do it. He is more likely to seek a gilded bauble than the diadem of glory ; and the most worthless gewgaw, or withering nightshade, this side the grave, has more attractions in his eye than the infinite riches and the crown incorruptible beyond. If you make a calculation, that the sinner will of his own accord suffer the powers of his understanding, and heart, and will, to act in accordance with their lofty nature, and to lead him to God, you will certainly be disappointed.

The experience of the world is against you. Thousands, and millions, and hundreds of millions, have lived and died impenitent, under all the solemn truths and appeals which you can bring to bear on their hearts; and you have no truth and no power of argument which has not been tried in vain countless numbers of times.

But how can the sovereign power of God be made the basis of calculation of success in efforts to do good? I answer, 1. None of the causes which defeat your plans will affect His. No tempest shall howl from an unforeseen quarter to frustrate His purposes; no blight or mildew shall disappoint His hopes; no obduracy of the human heart, or perverseness of the will, can operate as a disturbing cause to His plans; no loss of health or life, or change of times, can stay the execution of His fixed schemes. I answer, 2. God has purposes of mercy about the salvation of man which can be a basis of calculation. He had at Corinth, He has in reference to every age and to every land. He meant that the gates of hell shall never prevail against His church. He said that His "word should not return to Him void." He has solemnly sworn that to Him "shall every knee bow, and every tongue confess." The Saviour said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice." (John x. 16.) And there are those who were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will;" (Eph. i. 4, 5;) and nothing can prevent their being brought into the kingdom. I answer, 3. The purposes of God are those which contemplate the gathering in of those who shall be saved, in connexion with appropriate human efforts, and, especially, the preach-

ing of the Gospel. It is not by the exertion of independent power, it is not by miracles, it is in connexion with the use of means adapted to the end. And though some may be saved by means and influences which we cannot trace, yet the great law is that it is in connexion with appropriate efforts that men are to be saved. Beyond those efforts, there is no certain basis of calculation in regard to the salvation of men. Within them, it is limited to the sovereign purpose of God; and were there no such purpose, those efforts would be in vain. That purpose lies deep in the eternal mind. It has lain there undisturbed from the infinite past. It has been unchanged as suns have risen and set, as kingdoms have been founded and fallen, as human schemes have been formed, modified, and abandoned, as stars have been created, and have disappeared. In all these revolutions, the mind of God, about human salvation, has been one; without any new purpose, without any change of plan, without any tendency to its being abandoned or defeated. "He doeth according to His pleasure in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. iv. 35.) "I am God," says He, "and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are yet to be done, saying, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.*" (Isai. xlv. 9, 10.) It is that immutable counsel which constitutes all the basis of calculation for success in doing good in this lost world. And that is enough. *What more desirable basis of calculation can there be, than the unchanging purpose of an infinitely benevolent God?*

IV. There is a fourth consideration, to which I shall just advert, though the time will not allow me to do the justice to it which I could desire. It is, that the actual

exercise of that sovereignty is such as to be an encouragement to effort. In the case of the apostle Paul at Corinth, guilty and wicked as that city was, his success there was such as was fitted to lead him to rely more and more on the sovereign purpose of God to save men. The same was true elsewhere. No man probably ever went forth to an important enterprise under a more abiding conviction of the truth of the doctrine of Divine sovereignty than did the apostle Paul. "I have planted," said he, "Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.) So the preservation of the church in dark periods, the revivals of religion which have attended the preaching of the Gospel, the success which has attended every well-formed plan for doing good, all show how much encouragement there is in these efforts to depend on the sovereign mercy of God. Paul himself was arrested when there was no human basis of calculation that would cheer the heart of a bleeding church, that the great persecutor would be converted: and, in thousands of similar instances, the infidel chieftain, the persecutor, the scoffer, the profane, the man proud in philosophy, and confident in his own righteousness, the man educated, as Paul was, for a different purpose, and with a different plan of life, has been suddenly arrested, humbled, changed, by a power which he neither could nor would then resist, and made to preach that Saviour whom he had before persecuted. So, too, in the darkest period in the history of the church, clouds have been cleared away, divisions have been healed, the fires of persecution have been put out, kingdoms and men *that have opposed the Gospel have been destroyed by a*

sovereign God, in a manner which no human calculation could have foretold, and in such a manner that it was seen that it was directly by the finger of the Almighty.

But what I wished particularly to say was, that the success attending efforts to do good which actually occurs, is just such as to lead men to recognise their dependence, and to trace all to the interposition of a sovereign God. Now the preacher labours for years apparently in vain, and his message seems like seed scattered on hard rocks; then the soil seems to be made mellow by some invisible influence, and every word takes effect. Now all his arguments, and appeals, and instructions, are disregarded alike by the aged and the young; then truth so simple as to appear adapted to children has power to arrest the man of age and wisdom and experience and learning, and turn him to God. Now a whole congregation sits unmoved under an argument of truth; then all are bowed down under the same truth, as a forest bends before the mighty wind. And now, while the mass are unconcerned, the arrow shot at a venture reaches the heart of some poor sinner, that came with no special preparation; and, wounded and writhing with anguish, he comes to God for help. All this is the work of a sovereign God; our encouragement to effort, our argument for His agency, our demonstration of the truth of the great doctrines of grace, and the stay of our souls when we seem to labour in vain, and to spend our strength for nought. And, I presume, that every minister of the Gospel, when he looks back on his ministry, to learn from the past what are the real grounds of his encouragement in his work, looks instinctively to such manifestations of the power of a sovereign God.

The argument which I designed to submit is now before you. Among the lessons which it teaches are the following :—

1. The true nature of the sinner's dependence on God.

All men are ready, philosophically, to admit that they are dependent on their Creator; but this doctrine is so held as to produce no practical effect on the mind. The sinner will admit that he is dependent for life, and health, and reason, and strength, and favourable junctures, for the prosecution of his plans, as all men are. In common with all the race, also, he is dependent on God for the offer of mercy, and the knowledge that there is a way of salvation, and for the arrangements which God has made, and which were beyond the power of man. But the point of most immediate interest in this matter is, that he is dependent on God to do what he *could* himself do, but *will* not do; what he is under the most sacred obligation to accomplish, but what, such is his determined wickedness, he never *will* accomplish. He is dependent on his Maker for a disposition to love Him, to attend to his own interests, to feel compunctions of guilt where he has done wrong, to take one step in securing his own salvation. In a matter of the plainest obligation, and where the power is ample, he will never think a right thought, or have a right feeling, or be influenced by a right motive, to all eternity, unless he is led to it by a God whom he hates, and whose agency he scorns and regrets. And hence,

2. We may see the nature of human wickedness. It is so deep in the soul, so fixed and determined in its character, that man never will be, or can be, led to do right, without the intervention of the mighty power of God. There are no human means that will overcome it. There is no power of argument or persuasion, no regard to his real happiness in this world, or to his immortal destiny in the next, no pleadings of affection, that will induce the sinner to break off from his sins, and return to his Maker. Man is endowed with an understanding, but in religion he will *not follow* its dictates: he has a conscience, but he resists

its decision and promptings ; he has a will, but it is perverse and obstinate ; he is capable of affection, but his heart is attached to improper things, and he will not love his Maker ; he has interests of infinite value at stake, but he will not think of them, or regard them ; he is going to hell, and will not be warned to avoid it ; he might go to heaven, but there is nothing that will induce him to seek its glories. The simple reason for this conduct so strange, so passing strange, is the wickedness of the heart. And that wickedness is no slight matter which will lead an immortal soul thus to make itself everlastingly wretched, and which resists all the arguments and appeals which even God can place before the mind, rather than forsake it.

3. We see what is the prospect about the salvation of the sinner. The whole question is lodged in the bosom of a sovereign God, and it will be just as He decides. If an influence descends from heaven, you will be saved ; if not, you will not be. There is no other power to save men ; and we frankly and most kindly say to you, one and all, that our hope of your conversion is not in any native tendency to goodness which we believe you to possess, or any inclination which you have to do right, or any belief that you will of yourselves ever be any more disposed to attend to your salvation than you are now. Nor is it in any expectation that appeals can be made to your understanding, or conscience, or heart, or will, or self-interest, that will induce you of yourselves to come to God. We have learned not to preach with any such vain and illusive expectation as that. Our hope is in that sovereign God, who, by His own power, converted Saul of Tarsus, and Augustine, and Bunyan, and John Newton, and Colonel Gardiner, and all the infidels and scoffers and gay triflers who have ever gone to glory, or are on their way ; and we believe the question of your salvation is lodged solely in

the bosom of that Sovereign. Mysterious secret ! lodged and buried there in a heart into which no mortal looks, and which no mortal controls ! Dread Sovereign ! the destiny of all hangs on Thee ! If so, then,

4. We see where our encouragement lies, how ministers should preach, and how Christians should labour, for the salvation of their fellow men. We should not be discouraged. We should not feel that sin will finally prevail. We should not fear that a torn and bleeding church will be extinct. We should not feel that wickedness is to triumph in the earth, nor that all that are now wicked will go down to hell. Everything may seem to dishearten us. In our spheres of labour there may be all the embarrassments that opposed the Gospel when first preached. There may be all the prejudices that led the Jews to reject it ; all the love of gain that opposed it at Ephesus ; all the pride of philosophy that met it at Athens ; and all the profligacy adapted to sicken the soul of the apostle at Corinth : but there is the same God to carry forward the triumphs of the Gospel. And, in reference to a wicked world, we may hear Him say, " Be not afraid, for I am with thee ; speak, and hold not thy peace." And is it fancy, or the faith of fanaticism, that seems to hear Him say to each minister and each Christian, " No man shall set on thee to hurt thee ; for I have much people in this city ?" In the great work in which we are engaged let us, then, direct our eyes and our hearts to the great Sovereign, to whose mercy are to be traced all our own hopes of salvation. There *are* things which man cannot perform in the matter of religion ; there *are* things which, though he *might* perform them, he will not. There is no certain basis of calculation in our appeals to the understandings or the hearts of men ; but *there is* in the plans of Divine sovereignty, and our own

experience has taught us so. The world is wicked. Our friends are unconcerned about their salvation. Our kindred, and partners, and parents, and children, are regardless of their welfare in the future world, and nothing arouses them to ask the way to life. Whither shall we go? Where shall we look for help? Where can we find a solid rock of hope in our efforts? In the hope that God will mercifully interpose where we have no power, and that He will diffuse joy through our souls by their conversion, when our hearts are ready to sink within us. Our place is at the feet of that great Sovereign, where we have found mercy for our own souls; and there let us lie and plead with strong crying and tears in behalf of Zion, until "the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

5. Finally, my brethren in the ministry will recognise in the doctrine of this discourse nothing but what has come home a thousand times with peace and consolation to their own hearts. In the hours of our sadness and despondency, —and they are many,—when we feel that our preaching does good to no one, and that the word of truth seems to fall on the hard rock, we have had nowhere else to look for encouragement but to the high purposes of the God whom we serve. Then we have felt that, however man might receive the message, all is fixed and certain with Him who has called us into the ministry. What though the purpose be concealed from us, and we have no power to penetrate the secret counsels in Jehovah's mind; what though in our efforts we could not tell which would prosper, whether this or that; and what though we had no power to move the Eternal Arm to rescue the soul from death; yet our souls have been stayed with the unshaken belief that God *means* to save men, and that those "whom He has ordained to eternal life" will believe. Then God has

blessed us. When we have felt this truth most deeply, then we were most strong and most blessed. The soul never feels it so much as in the thrilling scenes of a revival of religion ; and men never preach with so much power, and so much success, as when they lie low before God, and feel that the whole question respecting the salvation of their hearers is lodged with Him. Then mighty obstacles yield, the mountains and hills are made low, and the rough places plain. The glory of the Lord is revealed, and all flesh see it together. In the great work to which God has called us, in the field which He has appointed us to occupy, amidst all the obstacles which *we* have to meet from the love of gain, the prevalence of unbelief, the self-confidence of philosophy, the gaiety, the fashion, and the vanity of the world, and in all the obstructions which we may ever meet from the opposition of erring brethren, our hope of success is in the sovereign power of God. If our counsels and plans are formed with confidence in Him, they will not fail ; if resting on our own wisdom and strength, we shall find them again, as we have often found them to our sorrow, formed in vain.

SERMON XIX.

NEW YEAR'S SERMON (FOR 1847).

A YEAR CONSIDERED AS A PART OF HUMAN LIFE.

"WE spend our years as a tale that is told."—Psalm xc. 9.

In the margin this is rendered "as a meditation," in accordance with the usual meaning of the Hebrew word *הִתְחַלְחַל*. Some have rendered it, "as a thought," the most rapid of all things; some, "as a sigh," a brief expression of sorrow that escapes from us, and vanishes. In our common version it is rendered, "as a tale that is told," an idle story that is designed to amuse for a moment, that is not worth seriously regarding or making an effort to remember, that soon passes away from the recollection. According to this interpretation, the meaning is, that life is suffered to pass as if it were a matter of no consequence, that it is spent in no employment that is really becoming our condition, and that it is worn away by trifles, which leave no permanent impressions, and which produce no important results.

Either of these interpretations conveys not an inapt account of life as it is usually spent; and either of them will accord with the object which I have in view this morning. Either of them would furnish an appropriate description of the life which many of us have led during the past year. That year has gone for ever, like "a tale that is told," like "a passing thought," like "a sigh" that is gently breathed forth, and is soon over. By many of us it has been spent without any deep sense of the value of time, of the true objects of existence, of the bearing

which the passing year has on our future being, of the importance of a year regarded as a part of human life.

At the beginning of a new year it is proper to look over the past, and to inquire, as we form our plans for the future, What is the purpose for which God has placed us in this world? The joys of the past year live now only in the recollection. Its sorrows have been passed through, and, like the joys which we have experienced, are not to be recalled. Our departed joys leave the heart sad that they are past; the sorrows that we have experienced leave it sad at the memory of the loss of friends, or property, or health; at the memory of blasted hopes, and of disappointments in our fondly cherished plans. In spite of ourselves, and amidst all our attempts to be cheerful, no matter what the year may have been to us, there is a sombre feeling which comes over the soul, corresponding to the sombre season of the year, and in the midst of our rejoicings the mind will be pensive and sad. We cannot help saying to ourselves, "We shall never experience these pleasures again. We shall never again grasp the hand of the friend with whom we began the year, but who has passed away for ever. We shall never now see the fulfilment of the hopes that we then cherished, which seemed to us so bright and cheering in the prospect. We shall not be able to recall the hours that we have wasted in indolence and folly; to carry out the plans which have been defeated by the allurements of sensuality or the fascinations of pleasure; or to secure now, on our own character, the happy influence which *might* have been secured, if that whole year had been devoted to virtue and true religion. We shall never be able to go back over that part of our journey, to correct the errors that we have committed, and to extract the poisoned barb with which by ingratitude or unkindness we have pierced *the bosom* of a friend. We shall never have an opportunity

of asking pardon of him whom we have injured, who is now in his grave; nor can we recall the harsh word or the unkind look that has fixed itself indelibly in the memory of those who love us. We cannot re-summon from the past this part of our probation, as it hastens away to join the distant centuries in the land of shades, and make it now tributary to our salvation.

A year, as our lives are bounded, may be a different thing to us from what it is to other beings. It is different from what it was to the antediluvian patriarchs, when almost a thousand of our years gave them an opportunity of repairing past follies and regaining what might have been lost; for a year bore scarcely a greater proportion to their lives than a month does to ours. It is different to us from what it is to an angelic being, to a redeemed spirit, to a lost soul; for by them it is not passed as a season of probation, and life with them is not soon to give way to another order of things. A year on earth, a year in heaven, a year in hell, if time is thus measured there, has its distinct features in each place. We are not concerned now, however soon we may be, with what a year is to the dwellers in other worlds, but we are much concerned to know what relation it sustains to our own existence here, and what bearing it may have on our existence hereafter. With this view, I propose to ask your attention, as a suitable subject for meditation at the close of one year, and the commencement of another, to this topic,—*a year considered as a part of human life.*

I. A year, however it may be spent, is, in respect to each individual, a very material part of his active life; of life that amounts to anything. We speak much, as the Bible does, of the shortness of life; and yet we seldom form any correct idea of the reality on the subject, and are perpetually liable, in our anticipations, to make life longer

than it really is. We fix the limit at seventy years, a limit brief in itself; not often reached; rarely passed. But even if life were made sure to us for seventy years, there are great and important abatements to be made from those years as to any positive efficiency in regard to the real purposes of existence. Let there be abstracted from those years, as life is in part ordered, the period of unconscious infancy, the period of playful childhood, the period in youth when we are merely *preparing* for the future,—a time often extending into manhood,—the periods of sickness, of sleep, of needful relaxation, of the infirmities of age; and a very large portion of the three-score years and ten will be absorbed. I do not say the playful period of childhood, or the forming season of youth, or even relaxation, sickness, and infirmity, are wholly useless, and to be cast out of the estimate of our actual existence; but I speak of what is commonly understood as life, when a man may make money, not merely learn how to make it; when he may cultivate his farm, not merely learn the art of doing it; when he may preach, not merely study to become prepared; when he may construct a steam-engine, not merely learn how to handle his tools; and when he may visit his patient, or plead a cause at the bar, instead of poring over his Galen or Coke. Abstract all that we must from life, and you take away much of what seems to be its enormous length to a child, and explain the reason why it appears so short to him who has run through it. If he had had seventy years of uninterrupted vigour and health, when he could have prosecuted life's great enterprises, day and night, without sickness, infirmity, or sleep, life might appear long to the old man too. But such is not life. Seventy such years are now unknown to man; he may count his lot a rare exception who can number anything like fifty such years. *The average length of active life is far below this standard.*

What, think you, is the average life of the mass of men, who have survived the perils of infancy and childhood, and who have passed through the seasons of preparation, and have entered upon their active duties? The average life of a minister of the Gospel is said now to be less than twenty years; and after all the long season of education in childhood and youth, after all his self-denial in procuring an education, after his seven years' patient toil in a college and seminary, and often at an expense beyond all his patrimony, what life holds out to the minister of religion in promise is, that he may labour not thrice as long as he has been employed in the mere business of making preparation. It is possible that the average of life, in other professions, may be somewhat more, but it is probable that this would not be a very unfair statement of all who are called to grapple with public duties, to meet the excitement at the bar, or in the hall of legislation, or to have all the sensibilities of our nature taxed when seeing a patient lying in peril of death. The average life of the farmer is great; that of the seaman, and the soldier, and the miner, and of various classes of manufacturers, less; and these twenty revolving periods commonly measure active human life. A year, then, becomes a very material part of our earthly existence.

Again: the real amount of active and efficient life, so short at best, is often greatly diminished by two other causes. One is, that many *begin* life late; and the early portion of what might have been their vigorous or useful existence, is spent in accomplishing little. Cromwell was a farmer until he was past his fortieth year; nor until that period did he appear with any degree of prominence on the stage of public affairs. Cowper composed the "Task," translated the Iliad, and wrote nearly all his poems, after he was fifty, and has left few memorials of what he did during what is commonly regarded as constituting nearly the

whole life. The early part of what might be vigorous and active life is often spent in idleness, or in dissipation, or in abortive schemes; and in such cases the individual has advanced far on his way before there is any serious purpose of accomplishing anything that will make mankind acquainted with the fact that he ever lived. Thus many a one that becomes a Christian has spent his early years, and the best part of his life, in dissipation and riot, in vanity and frivolity, in unbelief and sensuality; and the time in which he can now truly *live*, and accomplish anything in the real purpose of living, is crowded into the period when already the infirmities of age begin to creep on. The other circumstance in this life is often greatly abbreviated in its *closing* period: I mean not merely by death, or infirmity, but by other causes. A man has gained what he wished, and withdraws from the world. He has won a battle, and retires to repose on his laurels. He has amassed a fortune, and retires to enjoy it. Or, he becomes disappointed by a few bold and unsuccessful efforts, and gives over in despair. When young, he plumed his wings for a lofty flight, and meant, like the eagle, to ascend, and look at the sun; but the waxen plumes melted, and he fell to the earth, to attempt to rise no more.

It is a rare instance where one toils patiently on from youth to old age, forming a preparation for future usefulness by diligence and virtue, in early life securing all that was gained in youth by constant industry, and adding unceasingly to the treasure stock of wisdom, knowledge, and virtue, until the old man is gathered to his fathers like a shock of corn in his season fully ripe. Newton was one such man, a man by his native talent "placed at the head of the race," and by his diligence setting an example to the humblest of mankind who would wish to accomplish *anything* in wisdom or learning. Our own country at the

present time contains one such man, yet lingering among us, but sinking to an honoured grave, who may not be improperly mentioned here, a man who began life earlier than almost any who have been distinguished in public affairs, except the younger Pitt, and who has gone now beyond the common limits of human existence, who made all of life at its commencement that could be made of it, and who, when other men withdrew from public affairs, seemed resolved to show the world what can be made of its close; who has accumulated more knowledge in the departments to which his attention has been drawn than any other living man; who has filled up all his days with diligent acquisition, and the discharge of great public duties; and who will probably die, after all the obloquy heaped upon him, as the most honoured man, except one, with whom no mere mortal is to be compared, of the generations through which he has lived. But these are rare exceptions. They show what life *may be*, not what it commonly is. Usually short in itself, it is greatly abridged, either at its beginning or its close, and a year, therefore, is a very material part of human existence.

II. A year is important as a part of human life, because it is with many a forming period, determining all that is to come. A single year in certain circumstances may do much more on this subject than many years at another period; and while perhaps to multitudes that particular year may be undistinguished from others, yet to many it has an importance which no other one can have. It is to them the decisive year, the year that will be remembered, though all others shall be forgotten. Let me illustrate this thought with reference to the year which has just now closed, and which to many ever onward will have an importance which can pertain to no other period of life.

1. It has been such to those who have during that year

determined on their profession, or calling in life; an act that is probably to shape your whole future course, to determine the nature of your studies, your plans, and your associates, and which is ultimately to measure the amount of your usefulness or your celebrity in the world. 2. I is so in regard to those who have entered on some new form of business,—an act that will perhaps determine whether they will be rich or poor, honoured or disgraced, when they leave the world. 3. It is so in respect to those who have formed new friendships, entered into new business relations, or contracted marriage acts, that are to affect all their destiny here below, perhaps their everlasting doom beyond the grave. 4. It is so in regard to those who have formed some plan to be developed far on in life, whose fruits they do not expect to see until many years shall have rolled away. 5. It is so in regard to those who during the year have surrendered themselves to some insidious form of temptation. They began the year strong in the principles of virtue. During the year, those principles have been assailed with a force which they did not anticipate, and which they were not prepared to resist, and yielded. They have taken friends to their embrace, from whom at the beginning of the year they would have recoiled with abhorrence. They have admitted conceptions of guilt to their bosoms, to which, until the year now closed, they were strangers. They have visited places of amusement or infamy for the first time, from which a year ago they would have turned away with unutterable loathing. They have for the first time indulged freely in intoxicating drink, allied themselves with dangerous companions, contracted habits of evil, destined hereafter to grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength, and to which they are hereafter ever to be slaves. They have for the first time *disobeyed* a father's and a mother's law in being found in

a place of revelry and sin. They have for the first time drawn tears of anguish from a mother's eyes, or caused a sister to blush at the mention of her brother's name. These things send an influence ever onward; and far on in some future scene of poverty and disgrace, in the lonely dungeon, an outcast in the alms-house, or dying with a broken heart, a wrecked and ruined man, the year 1846 will be remembered as, by a bad eminence, the forming period of your life. That momentary act of yielding to temptation, that indulgence in some guilty passion, that hour when first you drank a social glass, never dreaming that you *could* be a drunkard, may seem to be unimportant to you now; and the year which has just closed may appear to have no special moment as distinguished from others; but the time may come when, in the beautiful and sad language of Job, with reference to the day of his birth, you may "open your mouth and curse it," and say, "Let that year be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it; let it not be joined unto other years, let it be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. Let the stars of its nights be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day." 6. Again: the past year has been important above other years in reference to those who have given up the heart to God, who have renounced the world, and who have begun truly to live to the honour of their Creator. By them that year will be remembered with songs and rejoicings for ever. It will determine their character, their course, their destiny, during all the present life, and then their character, their companions, their destiny, to all eternity. It will be remembered by them with joy when they lie on the

bed of death, when they stand at the bar of God, and when the "heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll."

III. A year is an important portion of human life, when considered as a part of probation for eternity. We have already seen that it is a material part when considered in its relation to active life, whatever may be regarded as the object of living. It is especially so, however, when considered as a part of the probation for a future state, and when we reflect on the manner in which it is actually spent by the mass of mankind. The period of probation for eternity is indeed commonly much longer than what I have spoken of as the *active* life of man ; for it includes not only vigorous and healthy manhood, but childhood and youth,—the very best period of life, regarded as probation ; the period of sickness, bereavement, and trial,—times when, though a man can do little for the present life, he can do much for that which is to come ; and old age, which, though the least favourable of all the periods of life as a season of probation, is still a time when, though the old man can no longer go to the bank or the exchange, though he can no longer plead the cause of injured justice, or lift up his voice in the senate house, he may *possibly* secure the salvation of his soul.

Life, all of life,—except unconscious infancy, the ravings of delirium, the stupefactions of disease, when the mental powers refuse to perform their office, and perhaps some forms of old age, *second infancy*, when there is no memory, or judgment, or sense,—is a season of probation for eternity. It has indeed other objects ; for there are duties growing out of our relations here ; and if man is to be himself the expounder of the design for which he lives, it has many other objects, and probation is the least and the last. But whatever other objects there may be for which man is *to live*, he is in all things a candidate for another world,

and all other things are to be subordinate to that. He is here with reference to a changeless state of being ; he lives and acts for that, whether he is conscious of it, or cares about it, or not. Each word, thought, deed, sends on an influence beyond the present life ; the account is closed at the end of each year, nay, each moment ; and he will meet everything which he has done, registered with unerring accuracy, the moment he crosses the line which divides one world from another. If this be so, then a year of human existence has an importance which is not attached to it by the great body of men ; for the results of conduct during one year may be multiplied beyond our power of computing now into the joys or sorrows of eternity. And if this be so, then the fact that a year is wasted, or, what is the same thing, *misimproved* in regard to this great purpose of being, has an importance which claims the attention of every traveller to another world. To the great mass of mankind, it is a sad fact that the year just closed has been thus a wasted year in regard to the great purpose in which God sent them into the world. They may have improved it for other purposes, but not for this ; they may have gained much, but they have secured nothing of that purity without which no one shall see God ; they may have won many conquests, but they have secured no victory over the "lusts which war against the soul." Nay, to human view, so far from making *advance* in preparation for heaven, they are *receding* while life wears away. At the close of the year they were, so far as we can see, less likely to be saved than they were at the beginning. They had less tenderness of feeling, less susceptibility of impression, less disposition to attend to religion, less respect for the Gospel, and they were more under the dominion of worldliness and sinful affection, more engrossed in the cares of life, more proud and unteachable, more tenacious of their opinions,

more under the influence of companions and associates who "cause to err," and who lead the soul away from God.

As there can be no doubt that there are some of this very description in this house to-day, I beg leave to address myself to you directly. You will concede the point, I trust, that life is a season of probation,—a point which you will probably be as ready to concede now, when we have passed through another year, and when you *see* how little a year accomplishes in regard to the usual objects of human pursuit, as you would be at any time. How then has that departed year been spent by *you* as a part of probation? What advances have you made in the real purposes of existence? What is now the probability of your salvation compared with what it seemed to be when you began this year? Let me state a few things, all of which you will doubtless admit to be true.

1. First. You have passed through another year, during which you have been all the while on trial for eternity. You have been in the world where this is the great purpose for which it was made and is preserved. You have lived in the world where the Son of God became incarnate, and died to make an atonement for sin, where the offer of salvation is made to all human beings, where the Holy Spirit comes to apply salvation to the hearts of transgressors, where many have been prepared for heaven. You have passed the year amidst great privileges and advantages in a Christian land, with nothing to hinder you from becoming a Christian if you chose, and where, perhaps, during the whole year you have regularly heard the Gospel.

2. Secondly. You have spent the year without religion. You began it without religion, you have gone through all its changes without it, you have closed it without it. Neither at its commencement, nor during its progress, nor at its *close*, have you had any true love to God, or repentance for

sin, or faith in the Redeemer. At no period during the year have you been prepared to die. At no period, if you *had* died, would you have entered heaven. The year to you has been, in regard to the great purposes of life, a *wasted* year ; and were it stricken out now from the list of your years, you would suffer no loss by it in regard to the salvation of the soul. You do not yourself believe that you are any *better* prepared to meet God than you were when the year began.

3. Thirdly. Many whom I address have gone through the year without having taken one step, or even cherished one sincere desire, to secure their salvation. In all that year you have not penitently and seriously kneeled, and asked God to have mercy on your soul. You have not once sat down to read the Bible with a desire to know what you must do to be saved. You have not listened to the Gospel with a deep personal interest, a sincere wish to know what the truth is, and what a man must do if he would be happy when he dies. You have not formed a distinct plan or purpose *ever* to make this a serious matter ; and amidst all the schemes of which the year has been prolific, all the subjects of inquiry, commercial, financial, political, scientific, or moral, which have occupied your attention, the question how a sinner may be saved, and an immortal soul made happy, has come in for no share of your investigations.

4. Fourthly. Whatever you may have *gained*, you have gained nothing on this the most important of all subjects on which the mind of man can ever be employed. You may have gained a friend, you may have gained property, you may have done something towards establishing a reputation which will not at once be forgotten when you are dead. But in this great matter of salvation you are as poor as you were when you began the year, and have *done*

nothing to secure the treasures where moth and rust do not corrupt, or to make clear your title to mansions in the skies.

5. Fifthly. With some of you the year has been passed in utter frivolity. Its chronicle would be a sorry record, on which you yourself would blush to look, of time spent at the toilet, in trifling conversation, in frivolous amusements, in reading that which did nothing to improve the understanding or to purify the heart, in idleness, in gossip, in needless slumber, in pastimes whose only object was to make you forget that there was such a thing as time. You had already forgotten that there was an eternity, and the aim of living has been to make the whole of existence a *blank*. Perchance, also, some whom I address have spent the year in scenes, whose recollection in days to come will only pour burning sulphur on a conscience laid bare to the wrath of God.

6. You are, then, Sixthly, now nearer the grave, but not nearer heaven, than you were when you began the year. You have a harder heart, you are more under the influence of the world, you are bound to this life by more attractive ties, you are less accessible to the Gospel, you are more disposed to turn away from the counsels of wisdom. There was more hope of your salvation, to human view, at the beginning of the year, than there is now. "Hope deferred," in regard to your salvation, has made the heart of many a friend "sick;" and already a father and a mother begin to look upon the prospect that you will be saved with despair.

Think, then, how short life is at best, how few are its active years, how important a portion a single year may be and is of your earthly existence; and then think of a whole year more, now absolutely wasted in regard to the great *purpose* for which God placed you in the world. Think

how little you have gained that is worth living for, even on the lowest principles of calculation about the value of things, and how soon even that little may be taken away : and then think what you have lost. To-day you might have been a Christian. The light of salvation, with the cheering light of this beautiful morning, might have shone on your path ; the peace which results from reconciliation with God might have taken up its permanent abode in your heart ; and the last sun of the year which has just " hastened to its setting," might have gone down on you as a child of God and an heir of salvation. Though it had been the last time that you were to behold Him, and this morning's sun might have greeted other eyes, but not yours, your souls would have had peace ; for you would have gone where there are brighter skies, and where there is no need of " the light of the sun or the moon."

IV. Any one year may be of unutterable importance as a part of human life, because it may be the time when probation will end and life be closed. To millions the year now closed has had this unspeakable moment. It was the period ordained of old in which they were to give up their great account, the outward boundary which God had affixed to their existence on earth. They had lived as long as Infinite Wisdom had judged sufficient to secure the purposes of their being, and their places were wanted for an advancing generation. A new race that was coming up needed houses where to live, land to cultivate, that they might be supported, air to breathe, and a place where to prepare themselves for eternity ; and it was needful for the former generation to be taken away. The great Husbandman removed them, as the farmer does the dry and withered stalks of the last year's harvest, that he may clear the ground for the green sprouts of another crop. So the earth, the great harvest-field for heaven, is swept all over of its old inhabitants

every thirty years ; and more than thirty millions of this cumbering population are removed each year. It is not, indeed, done all at once, nor is one place made wholly vacant at any one time ; but the work is not less certain, nor the sweeping any less entire. Where are the armies of Semiramis, of Cyrus, of Xerxes ? Where are the hosts that mingled in strife in the conflicts of the "Roses ?" Where are the pilgrims that settled New England ? Where is Penn, and where are the Indians with whom he agreed to live in peace ? Where is there a solitary human being to tell us what was on the earth at the beginning of the last century ? All gone : swept away as if they had all been cut down at once.

So of us. Of any one year, and of any one of us, there can be no certainty, but that *that* year may have all the importance derived from the fact that it is the closing year of probation. To tens of millions the year which has just closed has had the pre-eminence over all the other years of their existence, that it has sundered them from all that they held dear on earth ; that it has consigned their bodies to the grave, and sent their spirits up to the awful bar of God. Among them are not a few that we knew and loved. They began the year with us in the land of the living. As the year rolled on, they gave us the parting hand, and its last sun set on their graves. Events have shown that in our individual history that year was not to have this eminence. Whether to any specified individual this eminence among the years shall belong to the one on which we have now entered, is known to no human being. To some of us it will have that eminence ; and before its close the record on the tomb will tell the passing stranger, that this was the year on which we learned what it is to die, and stand before God.

We have entered on another year. We endeavour to

cheer each other in a world that we all feel to be full of dangers and sorrows, by mutual congratulations and kind wishes for the future. I will not attempt to penetrate the future. I would not know it if I could. I will not dwell on the prospect that many of the tender ties which bind us together, before the close of this year, will be broken ; that many of our hearts will bleed ; that many of these eyes will run down with tears. If I live, I shall see this soon enough. If I die, you will see it in me. But I will not anticipate it now. I will join in your felicitations and wishes for happiness and prosperity. But stand, fellow-traveller to eternity : may I not also ask one thing of you ? It is that this year may be wholly devoted to the great purpose for which life is given ; that you will stand no longer as the barren fig-tree, a mere cumberer of the ground ; that you will this day resolve, before your Maker, that, by His grace, the year 1846 shall be the last wasted, unprofitable, ungrateful, irreligious, year of your lives ; the last year on which you will close your eyes on truth, and live without the hope of heaven ; that by the grace of God the sun shall no longer rise and set, in his annual revolutions, on you a thoughtless, impenitent, unpardoned sinner. It is that you will now form a purpose, by His help, to reach forward to the eternal crown, and that as the days of the advancing year roll rapidly on, each morning shall witness the consecration of yourself to God, and that in the shades of each evening you will render Him praise. So living, its months and weeks will pass away without regret ; for they will be bearing you nearer to your eternal home. So living, if you see its close, you will arrive there with far different feelings from those with which you ended the last year. And so living, if you are to be arrested during this year, it would not disturb or alarm you much if a "still small voice" should be borne to your ear this

day amidst its joyous congratulations and its hopes, saying, "This year thou shalt die."

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon ; but sustained and soothed
By unfaltering trust in Christ. Approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."



